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Outdoor Philosophy

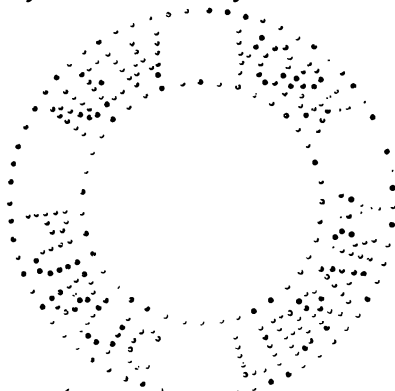
The Meditations of a Naturalist

By

Stanton Davis Kirkham^{ac}

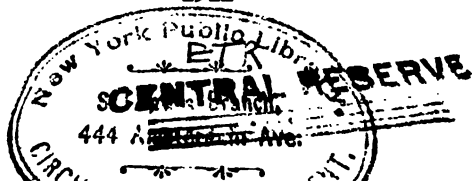
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INTRODUCTION

IT is my present purpose, in place of writing about woods and fields, to record the thoughts which these have inspired. Certainly I shall attempt the evolution of no system, as the term Philosophy might imply; yet am I inwardly assured that the result will be in some measure philosophic and, moreover, that it will be sound and sane, and it is this latter conviction, above all, which encourages me to proceed. Should any criticism unfold itself as the natural reaction of an outdoor life, let us hope that it may at least have the merit of being good-humoured. So I take some unction to myself in reflecting upon this good beginning, whatever the end may be. Having no complete philosophy to offer, you may expect nothing more than intimations of the philosophic life—the sane and beautiful life that haunts our Earthly dream. If some hints drop from the clouds, as many will spring from the ground. Perhaps the burden of this philosophy will be, that we aim to live

so free and open to intimations from above and from within that we are ever receptive to new impressions and new convictions: that we adopt, in other words, a receptive and growing frame of mind, and, if anything, avoid the danger of crystallisation, of the stagnation of a fixed belief or system of beliefs.

Let it not appear from this that we are to have a denunciation of institutionalism in its protean forms. Rather are you invited to read between the lines a plea for the individual life, and for the private life, in a day when the vulgarity of publicity and the tedium of an over-organised society confront us on every hand and almost drive a quiet scholar, loving his privacy and his leisure, but by inclination no recluse at all, to retire from the world in self-defence.

In view of this I am constrained to announce as my ideal, not an archangel, and certainly not the arch reformer, but the simple gentleman who worships God, cultivates his resources, and undertakes his charities in his own way; who loves beauty and who loves truth for their own sakes and not because it may be the fashion of the hour. Such a one may be assumed to love his neighbour without being curious as to his affairs, and, having in mind

that wisdom is of God and that flesh is as grass, is content to give ear in all humbleness to the admonitions of the Spirit that, as a child, he may be lead and instructed in the way of life.

It is greatly the fashion, whenever two or three are gathered together in the sacred name of Sociability, to mar the occasion for the lover of Truth—and of quiet—by expressing their views and opinions. These opinions, seldom advanced for the love of Truth itself, are too often mere prejudices and may even be predicted, given the age, temperament, breeding, occupation, and the fortune or misfortune of the individual—and given the state of his digestion. This pastime is supposed to be stimulating and in fact it does stimulate one to think that he is thinking. He is admonished to become a Socialist, to beware of Socialism; to worship the popular hero, to condemn the popular hero; to advocate the tariff, to condemn the tariff. As the arguments progress one may mentally check off the source of these opinions. But why should good folk wish to dissuade us from tobacco or Taoism or tea if these things are agreeable to our constitution? Ah, if we could only have a little conversation now and then.

While it may be good to listen to different views, the process of coercion is a weariness to the flesh. Imagine then the satisfaction of the author who, in his study under the heavens, may vaunt his opinions to his heart's content, may harangue the violets underfoot and the trees overhead and none can say him nay. Only the oriole shall answer him with his mellow flute and the chickadee with his cheerful note. This he does with vast delight in his unlimited latitude to "speak his mind" and in the equal latitude he accords his reader to agree or disagree, as his temperament, his insight, and the state of his digestion may permit.

Far be it then from him to wish to think for another, to provide ready-made thought like predigested food. But if his hobby be thinking, and he would be of some service in justification of his leisure and of his calling, he may again take unction to himself if, by favour of the gods, he can say aught that will provoke or stimulate any to think for themselves,—to accept or reject tobacco, or Taoism, or tea, for good and sufficient reasons of their own—and to find themselves, after a time, less concerned with opinions than with Truth itself and those intimations from within which

are heard in the silence alone. Thus he may perhaps be justified in soliciting an attention already so distracted by the multitude of books from the one vital aim, which is not to read about life, but to live.

The dispute between Nominalist and Realist will not end with Time, but we may thank the Pragmatist for reminding us of the part temperament plays in our philosophic predilections and of exhorting us again to be tolerant of one another's beliefs. I am well aware that my own temperament has somewhat to do with my idealism but am no less strongly assured that idealism is the right road. But why should we be in haste to label our cherished beliefs, or why should any one wish to carry a banner with the name of his religious or philosophic bias? As for character, it is stamped all over us, willy-nilly, so that any astute observer may read; while in the matter of beliefs, should we not strive to afford a clear channel rather than to obstruct with our prejudices the free course of Truth?

Perhaps we shall never agree as to the nature of Philosophy itself, since so many quaint theories of life have appeared in that name, but we may choose to think of it as essentially an abiding by reason, as a sort of

higher common, or uncommon, sense, in which we may take refuge, not only when troublous times come upon us, but from the ordinary vanities and inanities of the world; a spiritual and intellectual plane where the mind shall solace itself for the vexations of the flesh and for the unsatisfactoriness of human ambitions; a delectable region, where we may abide serenely, following ways of pleasantness which we have become fitted to enjoy.

In other words, like the Kingdom of Heaven, it is a state of mind; and the philosophic life is to "so love wisdom as to abide by its dictates," but first to so live as to be able to distinguish its counsel from the foolish voice of the world—to *know* when God knocks at the door. The aim of Philosophy must therefore be a free mind, clarified of its false beliefs, in harmony with Nature and at peace with itself.

Mind is the glass through which we view life. Hence the concern to adjust it that we may see things in their right proportions, to cleanse it that we may see clearly. In the history of Thought, the contention that the worldly life puts the glass out of focus has had abundant advocates, and in reflecting this point of view I am far from assuming

that Nature itself takes the place of society, or that the reaction upon Nature alone is sufficient. Nature is more properly an antidote than a substitute for the world. The companionship of Nature commends itself not only for its intrinsic value and charm but because it does assist the mind to free itself from the fatal hypnotism of the worldly life and of the world-thought with its illusions and disappointments. It is one means of adjusting the glass, and to see clearly is to know at least in which direction happiness lies. If, therefore, your philosopher of the open does not run with the crowd, it is because he has had some private intimations among the mountains that the goal does not lie that way.

In several books written long ago, and more or less inspired, there are hints of the true direction from men who saw, as from a mountain, a little farther than those living in the valleys below. Yet we are not entirely dependent upon them, and if any one will endeavour to walk with God—to borrow a splendid metaphor—he shall receive some guidance of his own from within, the admonition of the wise and unfettered Soul to one who traverses with such uncertainty and tribulation the changeful world of illusion.

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Outdoor Philosophy

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Outdoor Philosophy

CHAPTER I

THE PRESENT

ALONE in the hills, it has come to me again and again that I should make an effort to divest myself of the influence of books and of the world and behold my native self, observing what thoughts and influences come to that self out of the universal and what may be the mind's reaction upon Nature if left to see Nature for itself and not through the eyes of a hundred others, to see life for itself and not through the eyes of the dead. While this seems a profitable experiment, it is so manifestly impossible to carry it out that I must be content with taking an account of stock and discovering where I stand to-day in relation to life and in relation to new and old views. Even so, any remarks should be prefaced with a long list of acknowledgments:

Thanks are due to So and So and So, naming some ancient books and a few modern ones, and a number of men and women who have given me suggestions for good, and concluding with a line of ancestry to whose ghostly presence I doubtless respond.

One, however, who lives an independent life in the open air is less tied to the wheel of things than most men and can more easily obtain a little perspective, and if he pursues his calling because it pleases him, has no axes to grind, is indifferent to the state of the market, and under no obligation to profess piety, or riches, or even respectability for any supposed advantage to himself, he is comparatively free to allow Nature to play upon his Æolian harp with no further concern than that he should keep that harp in tune.

The idea of God to which I listened in my youth is far from being my idea of God, nor can I discover in history any such person as the Jesus who was then and is still preached in some pulpits. It remained for me in later years to discover for myself the compelling charm and beauty of that life. Like many another youthful enquirer I was early attracted to Marcus Aurelius. About that time I remember asking: What does Transcend-

entalism mean? whereupon Emerson's essay was put into my hands, and I found one with whom I was thenceforth to walk in the spirit. Of the Upanishads I had never heard till a chance reference excited my interest, and I opened that strange and wonderful book to find myself suddenly in the presence of a truth which was to profoundly influence my philosophic and religious life. Similarly in regard to Nature, the ghosts of Audubon and Nuttall, of Gilbert White and Henry Thoreau, arose before me one after the other, and aflame with youthful enthusiasm, I saw, as in a trance, a new world which was to become my own. So to-day it is impossible to disassociate myself from the view of life these influences have fostered. If certain ideals take rank above others, they are also the ideals of those who have most stimulated me. For that matter, how can any educated man say where he would stand had it not been for Greece, for Rome, and for Palestine?

It is strange, then, that one deeply indebted to certain great and receptive minds should find himself without reverence for authority, and this rejection of authority appears to be native and not the influence of any person or book. Why, then, agree with the master minds

at all? Because I am inwardly prompted to assent, not to what they say, but rather to Truth as said by them. If you ask how we know the true to be true, the only answer in regard to some things is, because we feel it to be so. Much, to be sure, is demonstrated by experience, much is to be reasoned, but some things transcend experience and are not to be proved by our little rules. "The Reason that can be reasoned," said Lao Tze, "is not the eternal Reason."

But there is in the world a great amount of superstition, false reason, and foolish belief, all masquerading as truth, and any number of weak and flabby or false and pernicious ideals. In society people assault you with their notions of life and look coldly if you dissent from their view. Mention Christian Science and the Orthodox glare; discuss New Thought and the Christian Scientists stiffen their necks; ~~but refer to Pragmatism and every one snickers because nobody knows what it means.~~ Talk of disease if you would have a sympathetic audience. All the world is an authority on hygiene and all the world is sick. Does your creed countenance buttons or does it not? This is amusing enough but it is also confusing to any but the strong and clear-

headed. Opinions pass but Truth remains. "I have no coat," said the old philosopher, "still I abide by reason." Let us abide by Reason indeed, but in the maze of opinions and prejudices, it is increasingly difficult to recognise truth among its counterfeits. Hence one must make an obstinate attempt to be free from these opinions and from his own false concepts and to come to himself. Certainly we have no cause to regard Chwang-Tze as authority in any case, but that ancient Chinese expressed in his quaint fashion a truth of which I have much inward assurance. "Oxen and horses have four feet. That is what is called the heaven-ordained," said he. "When horses' heads are haltered and the noses of oxen are pierced, that is what is called the man-ordained. Therefore it is said: Do not by the man-ordained obliterate the heaven-ordained; do not for your purpose obliterate the decrees of heaven; do not bury your fame in such a pursuit. Carefully preserve it and do not lose it. [Reason.] This is what I call reverting to your true nature." In an aggressive and self-vaunting age the philosopher may feel more kin to the antique doctrine of non-assertion preached and practised let us hope, so long ago in the State of

Cho by that serene old man Lao Tze—he of the Plum-tree family, who is reputed to have said to Confucius: “Let go, Sir, your proud airs, your many wishes, your affectation and exaggerated plans. All this is of no use to you, Sir. That is what I have to communicate to you, and that is all.”

It seems here in the peace of the hills, as it did to that ancient Plum-tree philosopher, that all this ado of the world is but a little surface rash after all: that we have taken hold of life by the wrong handle and must be born again and make a fresh start. “He who seeks learnedness will daily increase,” said he. “He who seeks Reason will daily diminish. He will diminish and continue to diminish until he arrives at non-assertion. With non-assertion there is nothing that he cannot achieve.” He who findeth his life shall lose it, and he who relinquishes the “ten thousand things,”—the exaggerated personal sense, the striving for effect, the effort to put out fire by throwing oil on the flames,—shall find peace. It is this doctrine of peace which the hills announce in their beautiful repose, here in New York as they did in Judea and in the province of Cho.

I would hear not what the theologians have

to say about God, but what God says of Himself in Nature and directly to us. Who is this God they make such long prayers to? Certainly not He whose presence is felt in the fields. When the mind is at rest, when the heart is softened by a mood of universal love and goodwill, when we reflect the repose of the everlasting hills—in those fortunate moments we may feel God within us. But if we would speak of Him, He is the Reason that cannot be reasoned.

What are dogmas to a man in good health and spirits who loves his work? Yet the philosophers are as bad as the theologians for they involve themselves in such abstruse speculations that they forget these have little or nothing to do with life, whereas philosophy should be primarily an aid to living. The human mind tends to enslave itself by habit and belief. As we lose health, laws of health multiply; and because we perceive very little Truth—which is the health of the mind—we multiply theories and beliefs. Riding and paddling under the sky, in the presence of that universal beauty which encompasses man, has a far better effect than all this theorising, and sooner permits us to see the truth, which comes of itself to whomsoever is ready.

Why do we vex ourselves with questions of the next world who make so poor an affair of living in this? Doubtless there is but one life, here or hereafter, a life we dimly perceive in our uplifted moments. As for the rest, it is a sleep and what we name the experiences of life, so many dreams. We may assume that the wise men—if such there be—are awake, and that philosophy is a means of arousing ourselves from the mortal dream into an abiding sense of the real and immortal.

Let it be granted that there is an established order, perfect and immutable, and if there be any philosophy worthy the name, it is that we should so live that the Spirit meets with the least obstruction in us to its free course and perfect expression. (This Divine Order is more clearly perceptible in Nature than in man simply because man so often obstructs by ignorance and self-will.) Yet it inheres in us as gravity inheres in the stones. If, then, we should endeavour to listen to what God says rather than to be for ever agape over the opinions of men, we might more readily discover the facts and come into harmony with them. When any man does have a glimpse of Truth and abandons himself to the Supreme Will, as did Jesus, for instance, silly people at once

obscure the account of his vision by much "supernatural" nonsense, found an institution, and announce their superiority. This institution in every case is so infected with fear of honest criticism, so fearful lest Truth be not self-sustaining, that it preserves fact and fiction alike for the bewilderment of posterity. Yet if a man loves Truth for Truth's sake he will regard those who can indicate the errors or defects in his view as having rendered him the greatest possible service.]

The world loves the words Infallible, Scripture, Revelation: but the only infallible book lies open before us, from the vine-covered slopes of Canandaigua to the lava peaks of Arizona; a revelation plainly enough, which might perhaps with justice be entitled *scripture*, since it was written by the hand of God and by none other, whereas the Scriptures of men were all written by themselves. If it may not be called an inspired book, it is that one above all others capable of inspiring us. The purple hills in the distance, the blue and glistening waters of the lake, the drifting cumuli over the golden wheat are chapters which I read day after day, as I could read no other book, and which yield ever new meanings. A thousand years would not suffice to reach

the end of the volume which is never dull like other books but full of mystery and charm.

In the fields some are ploughing: others are already sowing oats and barley. A philosophy of life must lead to more than theorising, even to a sowing and a reaping as actual as that in the fields; it must concern itself, not with fruitless inquiries, but with these practical affairs, truth and beauty, which are as necessary as bread. For these a hard-headed shrewd investor in the most valuable stock life offers will work early and late. How shall we best prepare the mind to receive the gifts of heaven? How gain contentment in a world of discontent?

But that which I propose to ask myself here above all is: What is the normal reaction of the cultivated mind upon Nature; what are the good harvests Nature yields the quiet mind at peace with itself, when we walk or ride or paddle, when we go into the woods or follow the trail? What view of life does it foster: what of idealist and materialist, stoic and epicure, riches and poverty, in the open; what of society and solitude? Does one perhaps see things in a clearer light who lives under the sky and nearer to Nature, with leisure to observe and to reflect? I propose

to let my thoughts answer for themselves as they may, assured that while they must declare in favour of the outdoor life they may at the same time intimate some ideals of larger significance and of philosophical bearing.

CHAPTER II

GROWTH

IN the woods at this season, it is brought home to one how absolutely Nature is committed to the policy of renewal, while at the same time we ourselves incline to become fixed and to stagnate. Human organisations, among other things, tend to limit the growth of the individual—to suppress and label him—and for this purpose a great many ingenious persons have devised labels without number that all mankind may be classified and disposed of. The fad for organisation has reached the pass that one cannot turn around without joining a society for promoting the interest of those who desire to turn around and for inducing its members to revolve in the same manner. Some are awakening to an interest in Nature but few dare go to the woods alone. They must first organise a club and hold a meeting, and then with bird book, opera-glass, and overshoes they may venture in quest of

the sparrow. Others would read French but not until a society is formed for the purpose, and officers duly elected. Why not an organisation for the cultivation of the sense of humour?

It would be churlish indeed to complain altogether of this tendency, since this labelling process and the competition to which it gives rise should properly afford not a little food for reflection as well as some wholesome entertainment. Nevertheless, a wall is thus built around the thought which few are nimble enough to jump over. Nature offers a chance to escape and call our souls our own, to be men for the space of a walk at least, and not merely members of a flock or herd, thinking the herd thoughts. There is no reason to suppose that ornithological societies really study birds, or botanical clubs, flowers; that philosophical societies have any definite notion of philosophy, or religious organisations any vital religion. The bird and the flower have a message for the heart of man that they deliver to no society, surely, and God whispers that in the ear which is never heard in the council of the elders.

If any one has escaped these things let him go into the woods unlabelled and thank God.

Let him wander alone and humbly listen, and peradventure he shall at last hear something. Nature, he shall presently discover, is not a subject in its finer aspects to be discussed in meetings or to be discussed at all. Let him be receptive in his solitary walks to the rare and subtle impressions which the woods accord and he shall find that he has come to himself; that not only has he had some revelation of Nature but, what is more, some revelation of the Soul. Thus not only do beans grow out-of-doors, but sometimes men, growing at first like vegetables, in time become super-vegetables by a finished and interior process of growth, while many, it must be confessed, do not get beyond the stage of beans and squash.

When I go afield, it is to leave the world behind that I may hear if Nature has anything to say for herself. In the glen where the stream sings its ancient song, one is transported to a world larger and more beautiful than that of the village and not on the county maps. Such a delectable region is to be found on the outskirts of many villages, but only one town surveyor was ever known to make even a preliminary survey of it and it is not recorded that the townspeople showed any interest in his report.

It is said that over every village hangs a cloud, a sort of mental miasma, which perhaps emanates from the communal mind as mist rises from the ponds. If this be true, its elements are doubtless gossip, criticism, curiosity and fear—with much Christian feeling and neighbourly goodwill, to be sure. It is this, furthermore, which produces that fatal contentment with commonplaces and mediocrity which is the sign of spiritual torpor. While the philosopher may escape into the larger world of outdoors, he is none the less sensible of the value of love and service for which he can thank his good neighbours, and again, of contrast, which he owes to the village gossips. These gossips are but good folk of arrested growth whose minds, fed on the husks of personality, have failed to develop for lack of nourishment.

What message has the Preacher—worthy man—that can compare with the warble of bluebirds? For the bluebird speaks out of his heart and does not merely refer to some other bluebird and to a past which cheers us no more than it does him. Some men are concerned with their state in the next world and others heed only the voice of the past, but here is a living word more pleasant to the ear. Some-

thing in me, deaf to all preaching, responds to that bluebird's note. I have no such joy in the kingdom to come as in the bobolink's medley in the fields; nor ever hear a more hopeful message than the highhole's "Wake up!" whereas so many books put one to sleep. And there is the sky—the unimproved sky—the only dome that gives room for thought, the only roof that does not sometimes seem too near. I shall never hear that under any lesser dome which shall solace me as does the expanse of blue and the changeful feathery clouds. That of which poems and symphonies only hint is written in the sky, to be for ever erased and for ever rewritten by the Master of Life. Yet if one cannot himself hear the oracle, he must be content with listening to those who perhaps hear no better than he. Religion has undertaken to tell us of another world, but, not really knowing any other, has succeeded but poorly, while the uninstructed thrush has that to say in the glen so truly *unworldly*. Let the preacher go to the hermit thrush and sit silent at his feet that he may at last hear a spiritual discourse.

This Kingdom of Heaven, as far as can be learned, is merely a state of mind which is to be attained in the process of growth—evolu-

tion away from ignorance, from worldliness, from selfishness, which are so many inhibiting states. In view of this, traditions but hamper us the more, who are already so burdened with our precious fallacies. In the silence of the woods, if one does not perceive Truth itself, at least the mind is disengaged and receptive and thus prepared to behold the dawn whenever it shall appear.

[It is easy to believe the wisdom of the world foolishness since the very animals know better, though it is no credit to them that they are content to be and not seem, that they pretend to nothing and indulge in no cant. If any are weary of hearing what man has to say, let them live awhile in the open, for Nature does not speak of herself but is the agent of that Higher Intelligence so largely obscured in us. It is because the birds and beasts *are* unconscious of purpose, of past or future, have no theory to prove, no axe to grind, that I would pay some heed to them. They are saner than we and yet know nothing of sanity; weather-wise and woodwise, but know nothing of wisdom; sound and strong, and have never heard of health. Whereas we—we are for ever talking about health and sanity and have little enough of either. The truth is, Man is an

experiment in self-government. Birds and beasts are still governed from above while we have been turned loose to work out our own salvation.]

This matter of salvation seems to wear a more serious aspect to those who are much housed than it does to one who lives out of doors. In close rooms, reading musty books and thinking about their sins perchance—or the sins of others—it has seemed to some that they must learn a great many things that other men have said, and follow a great many rules that other men have made, but as the doctors have always disagreed and always will, they are in a quandary as to whose rules to follow. The adherents of the several systems scoff at each other, while at the same time few have any vital faith in their own. In the woods the question appears simpler and there is no such confusion. One is naturally less concerned here with the history of opinions, but doubtless, too, the wind blows away much chaff. At any rate, he hears nothing of salvation but is constantly aware of evolution—of growth as normal to life. On every hand he is reminded that that which has ceased to renew itself is dead, and naturally concludes that there is a vast quantity of dead wood in

society as there is in the forest—men who had only a few brief hours of life in their youth.

Trees leading their calm existence suggest an unconscious and absolute compliance with a Will of which they know nothing. They are quiescent and it acts through them, renewing their leaves and adding rings of growth. They are very successful in life. These rooted men encourage me to practise that doctrine of *laissez faire* which the Soul prompts but which meets with little sympathy from my worldly friends. "Why do you not run to and fro with us?" they cry. They think that the quiet life means only taking root, whereas one may be sending up a shoot towards the sky. Ah, dear friends, it is not for long we are rooted here in any case. Man has no strength of himself; his life is of God. Let him live as true to his plane as the tree to its; let him yield himself as absolutely to the Supreme Will as does the unconscious tree and he shall be fitly sustained and nourished as man should be. This underground existence of man is a preparation merely and counts for nothing if we do not at length break through the crust of earth. Then begins the growth in the sunlight—after a second birth as it were. We are sown in the earth that we may at length

spring into the light. Having arrived above ground, it becomes evident that only a mind in accord with truth and in harmony within itself can have peace. As far as Nature is concerned my outdoor philosophy is a post-graduate course; for the learning which the Indian and the hunter acquire is but rudimentary. I have no rule to offer but only such slender hints as come to me in the open.

Maple and birch are now putting out their green flags. "Renew thyself!" they say, and thus I hope to renew and renew, going deeper and deeper, until after a time I shall have changed more than my clothes, more than my skin, and shall be completely transformed. It is cheering to see these new leaves, and bids us hope ever. All along the brook bloodroot, coltsfoot and trilliums, mitrewort, dicentra, columbines, and the first fringed polygala under the pines on the bank, say that which was never written in any book—in any other book. This outdoor volume is indeed the oldest of all and was written for eternity. Rare old volume, full of poetry and wisdom, beautiful beyond words with its illuminated text, its marvellous illustrations, few have ever read it profoundly; it is not advertised

and has never been adequately reviewed by the critics.

How much these flowers instruct by their beauty, their gentle life, in some ultimate and higher growth of man himself, when vanity and selfishness shall be laid aside, shall be cast off as an old garment, and he shall step upon this new plane as upon another shore, no longer this aggressive and brutish thing but with a touch of the angel—the super-man—in his thought and in his look, and shall essay henceforth to walk with God upon that peaceful shore. In their presence we receive intimations of growth and of life that accord with our inner promptings. Some bring the flowers themselves to the town but I have aimed only to carry a message from them. Being so poor a messenger I have never been able to convey the full purport of that which was received in the woods and can give only a detached sentence or two. If one has acquired a little wisdom of the ages, he shall find it is not current in the world, that it is like some ancient coin which people may regard with curiosity but which will buy none of the commodity in which they deal. None the less, let him cherish his rare old coin as of more value than anything that can be bought in the dull

markets and he shall presently find himself on a road where it is the only currency that will pass. Of this uncommon sense he will learn very little from men, though their disappointments have at least shown what road to avoid in future. The subject is not popular in society or at the club and plays small part in religious exercises. It is no longer supposed that any are interested in wisdom save the dead, doubtless because they alone have time.

It may happen to one who rides in the mountains that life shall wear a different face. In acquiring a new sense of proportions and values he may conclude that he has really heard wisdom's cry at last and is outgrowing some things that still absorb the attention of the educated. It shall seem to him—alone on the trail—not unnatural that all these grown-up children should be so busy with their toys, but he will not cease to wonder that they take it so seriously and are so irritable with one another when their playthings break, that they should be for ever squabbling over their dolls and should end in the sulks. Alas, he might even conclude that, in spite of all their pretension to wit, they really have no abiding sense of humour.

Because he has the mountains and the

desert for his playthings he is not to laugh at other children's toys—for these things too have their day—nor to exclaim, "What a big boy am I!" But let him thank the gods for his good fortune—for his pretty toys, for the æons in which to play—and he may be allowed to prattle innocently of his treasures and perhaps be excused some good-humoured comment on the pastimes of the rest. If the game they play does not seem to him worth the candle, few will be offended by his opinion since all sooner or later arrive at the same conclusion. In some things, however, they will disagree radically. Thus there is a little known pastime that will profit the player—the quiet game of the philosopher, who, if he is ever watchful, may perhaps win even peace of mind. To be sure the stakes are too high for the timid, accustomed to throw only for such trifles as a passing notoriety or a little money.

In the philosophy of which I have received some hints in the open, there is no fixed quantity that may be designated *man*; rather does man appear the product of an evolution whose limit we shall never see. From each higher stage it will still appear beyond. If one affirm his thought to be final it is a sign that he has not yet begun the true ascent. On the higher

level an impulse from within envelops the mind in a new atmosphere, as the year's growth encircles the tree with a layer of new wood in which the sap flows. So also in the growing part of man there is circulation, and that is to say, life. It appears that many beliefs and theories to which people are in such haste to subscribe merely produce excrescences which destroy the symmetry of their development. Like some trees, they are covered with protuberances formed at the expense of trunk and branches. Thus, one has a business excrescence of such exaggerated proportions that his weak legs will barely support his weight; another, a religious protuberance which saps his intellectual vitality and dwarfs his stature. That he of the business bump, unsymmetrical as he is and of meagre proportions, should pass for a giant is sufficiently amusing to a man in the woods with time to look about him.

It may be that, after all, I shall convey no message from the hills themselves, as I had hoped. Nature has never yet had a worthy messenger, for all sooner or later forget their errand in a garrulous desire to voice their private opinions. In truth, every man must himself go to the woods if he would know what

they have to teach, for the spirit of the doctrine is too often lost in the transmission. Assuredly, if he will go now, he shall feel the spirit of renewal in the air and may make an inner response to the call of the highhole, may even, like the oaks and hickories, hang out some cheerful sign in token of life within.

CHAPTER III

THE OLD AND THE NEW

THE suggestion that one receives most constantly out-of-doors is not of putting away the old, but rather of renewing that part of it which is alive. It is above all the old forest tree which is admirable, and our iconoclasm should be content with removing the dead wood from it. Among the Western Indians the idea obtains that the world is nearly exhausted and is to be presently renewed for the benefit of the Indian people, a belief due to the unwonted disappearance of the game and to that hope implanted in the savage breast of a better world to come. Surely the old earth ever renews itself but it shall be in the cattle of the white man and not in the bison of the poor red man of the Plains. Men and institutions are greatly encumbered with dead wood and the fanatical reformer cannot see that often it is that alone which needs to be removed and not the tree itself. We have

a right to ask of every institution, Is it alive? Why should society wish us to subscribe to those already dead? In this age of transition, changes which most distress the conservative mind are among the most hopeful signs of the times. We may conclude by reason of these very changes that the Church, which was surely nigh unto death, has taken a turn for the better and is showing signs of renewal.

A transitional period is a kind of spring-time in the history of Thought, when society renews itself. It is true that some strange growths appear—protuberances and excrescences which deform the social body. Even so, who would not live in an intellectual spring rather than in the sear and yellow days of the world? We may well be thankful to those who can give us a new and braver point of view, but if no better outlook is to be had let us abide by the old. After all, there is nothing new, and the best to which we ever attain is a new light on old truths. Truth does not change; it is we who change. What greater service can one render another than to open his eyes—not to new truth but to truth new to him? I would go a long way for this: even three thousand years in India and in Palestine, for new views on old subjects, uttered by men still

very much alive and still in advance of the times. Jesus is to-day a great and enterprising spirit in the world, a man still so misunderstood that it will be another two thousand years before it has caught up with Him. You will find in His thought very little dead wood, after nineteen centuries, which is remarkable enough, while in the meantime there has accumulated in the various systems of thought a vast amount of rotten timber.

Some are crying, "Back to Nature," and if this means only that we should turn from an artificial life to one more natural because more simple, well and good. Yet the fleshly man has not fallen from above but risen from below and the implication of any retrogression is not cheering. Listening to the stream and the call of the oven-bird from the bank, I am far from the world, as far almost as the wild ginger hiding its modest blossom under its beautiful leaves and the coltsfoot growing at the water's edge, or the yellow cypripedium, that flower which never fails to give a woodsy turn to the thoughts, from which is derived the most intimate feeling of that which is sylvan. But I have not gone *back* to Nature, for that ancestral apish man from whom we have ascended never mused on the song of the

redeye and the woodsy personality of the moccasin-flower. He considered them no more than does the red squirrel who scolds from the hemlocks. One must have gone far indeed from that ancient man, so much like a monkey, so little like an angel, before he can come to know and love the vireo and the orchid. The Nature that I see is not the Nature he saw, not the Nature the Aino of Japan, the Pygmy of the Congo, or the clay-eating man of the Orinoco, who so much resemble him, still see.

Ten thousand years, it may be, lie between the cultivated mind and that primitive tree-man with his rudiments of speech, his simple thoughts and emotions. If we have gained much through cultivation it is not to be wondered at that we have lost somewhat by artificiality—being human. Now in heaven's name let us strike a balance. We shall go forward, not backward, to a profitable view of Nature: but in order to do this we must lay aside the artificiality we have acquired in the civilising process, which may be likened to the airs a boy takes on at college while acquiring his education. It may be that some have come away with nothing but these airs and vices to show, and a certain ele-

ment of mankind has only its artificiality to differentiate it from the savage. Civilisation is a disease with some and culture a kind of hysteria, but this fact does not in the least discredit a normal evolution or a true culture.

Long the Indian listened to this stream and paddled on Canandaigua Lake and the smoke of his camp-fires has ascended from these woods and from the hills now covered with vineyards. He knew the habits of deer and fox and wild fowl, a keen observer, but with little feeling for beauty. He imagined for himself a vengeful god like unto that of other primitive tribes, even they of Israel; his heart burned with hatred of his enemies and revenge was his controlling motive. That he should have disappeared so completely in so short a time passeth understanding. No sign is left of one who considered this his land for ever; but that which blotted him out was merely an incident in what we name Progress. He was not a growing man, did not expand with the present but stood grimly for the past—an obstructionist, a piece of dead wood.

Yet far as time has removed us from him, from his vengeful savagery and his inability to adapt himself to change, there are heard

in the hills and upon the lake some voices that he was wont to hear and his ancestors before him. "The Sun is my father and the Earth is my mother," said Tecumseh. "On her bosom I will rest"; and something in me responds to this; so do I love my father the Sun, my mother the Earth, and am content to be with them. In the twilight of the woods that wild ancestral self awakes and comes forth as of old—silent, furtive, alert, feeling the old affinity with the wild, the ancient spell of the forest; moving noiselessly in the shadows, hearing every faintest sound, seeing every motion of a leaf. For a moment I look about me as did that primitive man, as does the animal, seeing objectively and without association, and then the burden of complex thought descends again and I see subjectively and am separated by ten thousand years from my ancestral self.

We cling to the past but great Nature hurries us on. The seed perishes in the ground; the tree springs into the light. Races disappear to make room and the old thought, the old custom, the old creed as inevitably give way to the new. [Nothing is final but the Soul. But the new is not necessarily better than the old; good is independent of

time. If men once produced better pottery, metal work, violins than they do now; made better statues and wrote greater poems, it was because they were absorbed by certain lofty ideals of art and of beauty, whereas now we are distracted or wholly given to material aims.] It is to the credit of the ancients that wisdom was more highly esteemed and philosophy more seriously regarded than with us. Hence the old books which have descended to us, like the statues of the Greeks, have a certain excellence derived from the spirit of the times in which they were created. But to accept any book or compilation—the *Book of the Dead*, for instance, or *Gulliver's Travels*—without qualification, shows not only lack of discrimination but of spiritual discernment.

If we wish to read the applied sciences we turn to the latest books. Those of ten years—of one year—ago may be already antiquated. But if we wish to read of wisdom and the way of life, we must go to the Sacred Books, not because of their venerable aspect, but because they are still the latest books on the subject. We have made some advance in practical psychology, in spite of the colleges, but in the philosophy of life, none; all we have is borrowed—like our religion. These old books

were written partly from within, whereas most books are written wholly from without. Hence I go to them and not to the great scholastic philosophers of England and Germany for some crumbs of the bread of life which alone restores and renews. They are like strata deposited early in the earth's history but containing the elements of a rich soil, while later strata may be destitute of these essentials.

It doubtless appears very different to near-sighted folk in ill-ventilated houses. The world of the crawling beetle is not the world of the soaring redtail, yet one sees as correctly as the other from his standpoint. To one who has been long in the open it seems of little consequence whether he subscribes to theories new or old. If any word stimulates a normal growth, why need we ask whether it comes from the past or the present, seeing that the newest soil is but the old made over and the tree but the long forgotten dust of other trees? That which is never old—in the tree and in man—is life itself, and growth is but the evidence of its presence. Strike root in the soil adapted to your needs and which sustains you. Some trees thrive best in one and some in another, according to their nature, and if one were to transplant the pines to the

swamp and the larches to the hillside, neither would prosper. Yet this is precisely what the bigot would do with mankind. Certainly Nature does not ask if we are old-fashioned or new-fashioned, but are we alive and growing and are we sound at heart; and this applies to men and trees no matter what label may have been tied to them.

I knew a man whose eyes were in the back of his head and who could see nothing unless it lay in that direction. If he had lived in the Stone Age, he would still have regretted the age that had been. He aspired above all to resemble his grandfather and discouraged all originality in others. But it were no more just to condemn that man than to berate the stones in the bed of the brook which check the current while they add variety to the appearance of the stream. If there were no conservatives in society we would be swept away and carried out of our course, while were it not for the liberals we might stagnate. It is the part of the philosopher, however, to regard neither the old nor the new but to seek ever the *true*. Time flows on like a river and not even China or the Vatican can stem the stream of progress. Yet how many things in the name of progress offend our idea of culture and our good taste.

The shallow individualist, the intellectual parvenu, and the blatant reformer almost persuade me to seek the cloistered seclusion of the past.

Wine and violins and Persian carpets must needs be old, for age alone reveals their merit; and so does thought need much ripening and mellowing. We are afflicted daily with green opinions—acrid or insipid because unripened by time and sun; and by people who have no proper respect for the past from which we have derived so rich a legacy. What æons of time went to the laying down of this shale and limestone, the soil in which thrive our woods, and what generations of oaks and maples contributed to its enrichment and prepared it for the present oaks and maples. Now comes a popinjay with axe and saw, with unsightly poles and billboards, and calls the result Progress. Change must come and if the muses are not asked to preside we must bear it as best we can.

In his history of Rome, Ferrero contends that the "corruption" of which the Roman authors complained was in reality a name for Progress. It was *change* which they opposed—the corruption of ancient customs. We have as good reason to-day to regret the decay of

some customs—the decline of courtesy, the increase of vulgar display, and the commercialisation of art and religion. No sadder spectacle confronted the ancients. Yet the flowing stream of Time shall presently bring us to other shallows and still other pleasant meadows and nowhere shall we linger long. It was so in Imperial Rome, in ancient Nineveh—and it will be so in the world to come.

The Past is a record of growth for the Present to read—if only it had time. Let men travel to the site of Thebes, of Troy, and of Babylon, for the good of their souls. If we reflected more on these things we would walk humbly before God and seek understanding. What big little men we are in our own eyes, but who will remember us to-morrow? And day after to-morrow who will recall our national achievements any more than do we the deeds of the Assyrians, who also contemplated without humour their own greatness. Twenty feet below the ancient Roman forum, a graveyard was uncovered of whose existence the Romans were doubtless unaware. Who *were* the Assyrians, to be sure, and tell me if you can, your great-grandmother's name.

In the bank before me is the fossil shell of a creature that lived before Nineveh—before

man. There it lies in this wonderful volume of the earth whose stone leaves record the life and death of races, families, and orders, the most ancient history of all. What are we but trilobites that shall presently contribute our bones to the earth to be ploughed in the bean patch of some future trilobitic man—unless, indeed, we are detaching ourselves from the earthy consciousness and awakening to the life of the true and divine man? Again I am reminded that all is a state of mind and our growth a spiritualisation of aims and ideals. Death is but one of many changes and still I cherish the hope that it will reveal a brighter world or perhaps a clearer view of this. The death to be feared is that slow dying in the flesh, the clouding of the mind till it sees and accepts only the gross aims of the world. If we cannot live to Beauty, if the love of Truth no longer stirs us, we are already dead.

So many new inventions but we are no happier. If the ancients were deprived of these, at least they had less to distract them from the pursuit of wisdom, and wisdom is the main thing. If you ask what I am seeking—it is neither the old nor the new: I seek only a trail to the hills. Experience is doubtless one way, but it appears that philosophy is more

direct. And yet—when we consider the systems without number over which men have argued and contended with such heat only to forget them again—what do we mean by philosophy? Remove the dwindling plant from the shade to the sun and it will thrive in due time, and perhaps this is all I have in mind—to ascend from darkness into the light which stimulates to a normal growth by laws of its own.

CHAPTER IV

THE NOMAD

THERE are days when beyond the rye-fields and the orchards of New York, the lava peaks and the shimmering deserts of the Southwest seem to rise before me, and that in me which is kin to the Navajo and the Apache, the restless wapiti and the migrating birds, responds to that strange call and feels the ancestral yearning for the wild. When the leaves are rustling under foot and the old haunting sadness is in the air, when he hears the last warble of bluebirds and the honk of passing geese, the heart of the nomad longs for the great open spaces, for the broad blue sky, for the snow upon the peaks, the sunlight on the mesas—for the saddle and the trail.

Hunting and pastoral stages still persist in us, and ever and again some outward stimulus, as the mere sight of the mountains or of a solitary pond, the drumming of a grouse or the scream of a hawk, will bring to the surface

that untamable nomadic self whose heart is bound up in the wild. This nomad is in part an inheritance—a ghostly ancestral self rising from the primeval forest and the ageless desert: he who never knew cities or houses, who had the earth for a bed and trees or rocks for shelter, the plains and the mountains for his estate, the sky for a window; whose only book was the living book of Nature. It is perhaps in a greater degree merely the everlasting protest of the health of the mind against the artificiality of society and certain aspects of the gregarious life.

[It belongs to youth as it belonged to the youth of the race. Age and civilisation alike tame us but they restrict our freedom as well, and I would keep alive this instinct, as I would keep my youth, as long as may be.] Youth with all its folly has a little freedom till it accepts the fears and superstitions of the world, which, with the responsibility of life, soon clip its pinions. Youth is also selfish, vain, and unrestrained. Can one perhaps retain that freedom, while life purges the mind of its selfishness? Must we become these timorous conservative creatures in order to learn a few salutary lessons and become more kindly neighbours? Though we are here set to dis-

ciplining and reforming that old Adam in us, it is not "heaven-ordained," but the "man-ordained," that we should relinquish our liberty, and we are given the mountains and the desert wherein to regain some native vigour of thought.

This summons of the West I obey with a feeling that it is a return to a youthful freedom of view, no longer exaggerated and irresponsible, but triumphant because grounded, not in any mere sense of escape from life, but in the consciousness of having met life, looked it squarely in the face and felt, despite the failures and discomfitures, there is that in man which is unconquerable, matching itself against untamed primeval Nature and demanding room for itself, and which sees the village street, the city blocks—equally petty, equally inadequate—fade and give way to the lonely mesas, the ragged purple mountains, the sands of the desert and the chaparral-covered ranges with a sense of exultation, as a runner goes forth to win a race.

This aboriginal self, common to all men, becomes so localised in the individual that he finds, wanderer though he may be, within the bounds of his own country that which is the expression of himself and most dear

to him. To me the lava peaks, the deserts, and the mesas, the granite domes and the unbroken coniferous forest sloping away from a dazzling snowline, are as some well-thumbed volume, the companion of years, or as my very garden: it is indeed the garden of my larger intrepid self, he who disports himself upon the mesas and leaps upon the mountains, who communes with the God of the Open in the silence of the desert. Those green Doric columns of the saguaro, solitary on the cliffs of ochre and Indian red, like the gaunt sugar-pines of the Sierra, like the incomparable sequoia, like the yucca and the agave, are native to me as well as to the soil, and my aboriginal self, the nomad, gazes at them with satisfaction, for they are wild and free, as he is wild and free. Where they are, there is his native land, and where the mountains rise out of the opal desert, like islands from a shadowy sea, there he sees no bounds anywhere, and is at home under the sky.

These saw-toothed ranges, these virgin forests and mountain lakes are the forms in which the American spirit should clothe itself in art, and American trees, birds, and flowers are the proper symbols of its artistic life. The most richly endowed of all people, we are still the

greatest borrowers, taking our imagery from that which is alien in time and place—from dying Europe and dead Palestine. The North Woods, the painted deserts, the Sierra forests, are not suggestive of a Hebrew God or Greek philosophy, French art or English poetry, but they speak to us of the living God and the need of a spirit indicative of this age and this continent, in religion, in philosophy, in literature, and in art: for this age is not only the culmination of all the ages that have been, it is something of itself, something superior to them, and it is on this continent it should find its true expression.

With coffee-pot and fry-pan tied to my old stock-saddle and canteen slung over my shoulder, I ride in the dawn over the mesas where the saguaros stand erect upon the cliffs and the red penstemons and castilleias glow like coals on the lava, around me ten thousand square miles of wild country, granite, and schist and lava—rugged, savage, lonely. To one more at home in the saddle than in any arm-chair, the artificial life of cities seems mean and paltry. Here is air and space and time. He feels the keenness of his eyes, the toughness of his sinews—and this is the savage zest of life. The trail draws him on and on, the desert

lures, the silence is more welcome than speech, the mountains are companions: verily he needs not good fortune. It is fortune to feel the horse under him; fortune to hear the scream of the redtail and to see the jack-rabbit leap away from the trail, the coyote slink over the ridge; to expand the lungs in the clean desert air. All days are alike. He answers to no clock or bell. With bread, bacon, and coffee in the saddle-bags he has but to tether the horse and throw off the saddle, gather a few dry sticks and light a fire. As he looks out over the desert mountains, unutterably beautiful in the enchanted distance, the thin blue curl of smoke ascending in the limpid air is sign he is at home in Nature.

Such is my camp, my church, my study—and it is none too large. There are days when it seems small—when the solar system seems small. No muezzin calls to prayers; no priest misinterprets a message that came out of the desert and which he can little understand who has passed all his days in a house. [This church suits me very well, but there are those, of course, who would convert me to *their* church—which is small and stuffy. Until their creeds have taught them to love one another why should they disturb one in his

devotions who was early baptised in the burning sunlight of the desert?

The desert, always mystical to the dreamer, fosters meditation as it has done from the beginning. In most men there is something of the poet which the practical exigencies of life quickly obscure. Perhaps it is as well, for among those who give rein to their dreaming tendencies it is likely to end in wool-gathering. Even so, I share the reverence of the ancients for the spirit of meditation—an antique predilection for which one need expect little sympathy, since argument and discussion are the fashion of the hour. Nonetheless, it appears that truth does not come in that way; that we are most receptive when least disturbed by opinions. Consciousness is like a body of water which reflects the heavens only when itself serene. It was a mystic and a dreamer who announced the most practical truths—one wont to dream on the arid mountains of Galilee. "Jesus seems to have specially loved them," says Renan in speaking of his development. "The most important acts of his career took place on the mountains. It was there he was most inspired." Few men see that while Jesus was in no sense a speculative philosopher, he announced the essential fact

of the philosophic life, for surely that is its true province to maintain the doctrine of the Within in distinction to the worldly doctrine of the Without.

It is strange what favour this subject of "dreaming" has found among widely sun-dered peoples, indicating an inherent appreciation of the necessity of abstracting the mind from considerations purely utilitarian if it is to rise to the perception of spiritual things. Listen to Smohalla a chief of the Wanapums of Washington:

My young men shall never work. Men who work cannot dream and wisdom comes to us in dreams. You ask me to plow the ground. Shall I take a knife and tear my mother's bosom? You ask me to dig for stone. Shall I dig under the skin for her bones? You ask me to cut grass and make hay and sell it and be rich like white men. But how dare I cut off my mother's hair?

Compare this with the Gita:

He who subdueth not his senses hath no understanding, nor hath he the power of meditation, and he who doth not meditate hath no peace, and how can the unpeaceful obtain bliss?

Or better, with Ecclesiasticus:

The wisdom of the scribe cometh by opportunity of leisure; and he that hath little business shall become wise. How shall he become wise that holdeth the plow, that glorieth in the shaft of the goad, that driveth oxen and is occupied in their labours, and whose discourse is of the stock of bulls? He will set his heart upon turning his furrows; and his usefulness is to give his heifers their fodder. . . .

Not so he that hath applied his soul and meditateth in the law of the Most High. He will seek out the wisdom of all the ancients, and will be occupied in prophecies.

At present it does not appear that "he that hath little business" necessarily becomes wise; nor have the dreams of the medicine-man accomplished much for his race. Yet where the treasure is there will the heart be. If there is a message from the beautiful savage mountains on the desert to those who run to and fro looking for happiness, it is this: First clarify thy mind! Fame, money, time! What are they in the desert, which by its mysterious power overcomes these concepts and makes them nothing, as an opiate seems to overcome pain? It is hypnosis, yet to be free for an enchanted hour from the pain of many fears, many desires, is rest.

This talk of the nomad implies no more than that the instinct is still alive and that I

give it play during a part of the year, for I would not be as settled as some I know, so settled in any one spot, even Paradise, as to share all its prejudices, or that any house or any rut should bound the horizon. Better than this is the nomad's tent; better the blanket on the ground and every day a new horizon—remote, elusive, undefined—drawing us on ever and for ever. [This world is as interesting as the next but it is a pity it should hinder our freedom.] While I owe it something, I hope so to increase my resources by living in the open that I may discharge the debt, like a prospector who has struck a rich deposit and after a long absence returns with a bag of nuggets. There are many days that yield no return—as every prospector knows—but there is always good company in the mountains. It is this sense of being at home, of enjoying a kinship unknown to the indoor man, which so largely compensates for the lack of human society as to make one in time somewhat independent of it and to give too solitary a cast to the mind, so that one becomes lonesome in cities and in crowds. This is, perhaps, a serious objection to the open-air life. The naturalist may come to love, not man the less, but birds more, and to regard man more in

the abstract than is good for a practical relation in a practical world where we were meant to be of service one to another. But most men—and some women—talk too much, and herein the silence of the desert and the solitude of the mountains, like sleep, is a relief from a too garrulous and gregarious world. [If the silence teach us nothing, it must be that we have no ear for it, or that our finer hearing has been destroyed by the noise.]

CHAPTER V

THE PASTORAL MAN

IF, then, these orchards and vineyards, my cornfield and garden, make a stronger appeal than the desert, it is to that pastoral man who succeeded the aboriginal hunter and whose inheritance in the earth is so much larger, for in him cultivation began. In the mind of the nomad this idea has no place, but to the pastoral man it becomes the ruling motive, and whereas the hunter only took from the earth, the cultivator gives of himself—of his thought and of his labour—and his ultimate harvest, though long in arriving, is not of the fields but in an enlarged and enriched sense of himself.

Whether we cultivate our estate in Nature or in Intellect, the development of resources within and without us is that to which the growing mind turns with the greatest zest. I play at farming but would cultivate my mind in earnest as the more profitable field for

investment. Yet it appears that garden and field correspond to something in us, are outlying parts of ourselves; we are the richer for their beauty and whatever we develop in them we seem to add to ourselves. Since contact with the earth is normal to man, such sympathy with the soil as a garden encourages is as natural as a relation to society. An abandoned farm reminds one of the uncultivated though educated man, who runs all to business and eating, as the farm to thistles and burdocks—an abandoned mind, so to speak. This average man, this almost universal man, learned at college a little botany and geology, a little French, Spanish, or Italian, an outline of the history of philosophy, something of the theory of music, perhaps, and was introduced to the best poetry and prose in his own tongue: in other words, the ground was prepared and some good seed was sown. But how is it with him now? He knows neither a bird nor a flower; philosophy is a dead letter with him; he knows no more of the literature of France or of Spain than of his own, for he reads only the newspapers; that subtly beautiful world in which the musician lives is lost to him; as for conversation, he can talk only of business or politics; while leisure, that

essential of the cultivated mind in which it nurtures its truest thoughts, has no part in his life. In spite of the darkness of that age, they did more in the time of the Medici to keep alive the love of the beautiful.

Perhaps it is because it fosters the sense of beauty as the wholesome and natural—not to say spiritual—part of one, that a garden may be such a resource. Yet it is equally because of the sense of peace it accords. From the first tulips in the spring to the last phlox and asters in the fall, a garden is gentle company and the garden walks peaceful paths. [That world of fear and discord which the papers daily announce as the reality, seems here among the flowers to be but some disordered dream. All that is subdued and modulated, all that books and the finer influences have done for us, is here at home and content under the spreading elms upon the lawn.] These gay tulips speak of some beautiful reality of light and colour. Lilacs are typical of serenity and an old-fashioned reserve, as if they were the natural accompaniment of the superior and gracious life of gentlefolk. Iris and peonies, wistaria festooned upon the house, have an exotic charm and bring delicate fleeting fancies of Old Japan which mingle

with native homely thoughts. To one who has long cultivated exotic fields of thought and every now and again gathered some harvest in fancy, they are no more alien than to the bees. Roses, like well-born and beautiful women, give the impression of something inherently fine and noble, designed by nature to reflect grace and beauty upon the less favoured. Foxgloves and Canterbury bells along the garden walks are quaint and lovely personalities breathing some refinement of life; and all old-fashioned flowers are the very embodiment of sweet and simple virtues, so that among them one is made to feel as if already in a better world, the heart chastened and fitted for this purer company.

How natural, and yet to what cultivated sense as well, is this appeal the garden makes through the personality of flowers, with their visiting bees and butterflies, of smooth green lawn and sheltering fatherly trees, an environment at once sylvan and floral with the charming associations of both. How much cultivation, how much turning of the soil, before the savage in us—the rank and weedy part of us—was made amenable to this serene influence and we could pause amid the grosser distractions of the world to hear the message

of the gentle race of flowers, so superior to any preaching. For they do not preach about sweetness and purity but are these qualities embodied. The more cultivation has progressed, the more congenial is the garden. Since it fosters quiet and thoughtful moods, the barbaric man, the nomad in society, strenuous, aggressive, and unreflecting—has no part in it. Above all is it conducive to the love of privacy—not solitude, such as the mountains and the desert afford, but privacy. A garden is a nook, a corner in the universe, where we have the company of our thoughts and the comfortable consciousness that the world is excluded. None peek, or pry, or report our doings. Here are admitted only bees and butterflies, spiders to spin their webs, and ants to tend their aphid herds. It is a little world more dear to the pastoral self than the solar system, pervaded by contentment and well-being.

Apart from these considerations, is the practical relation to the soil which belongs to the pastoral self. Cornfield and bean patch, grapevines and apple trees, bring us in touch with the earth in a sense neither the nomad of the desert nor the artificial man of the city can enjoy, and no relation is more sane, none more

wholesome. In the vegetable garden we seem to enter into a partnership with Nature, wherein if we plough and plant and cultivate, she provides the table with food and the mind with the thrifty satisfaction which the sight of growing things affords. As a party to this co-operative plan, interest is stimulated and the relation to Nature established on a sounder basis. It is a good venture, resting on sound principles, which pays well, not in money, to be sure, but in more than potatoes and apples alone: for the reaction of the mind upon this practical relation is a sort of leaven of good sense which pervades the complex mass of thought, keeping the interest near the earth and not in the clouds, and yet not weighing it down. But it is otherwise with the farmer—poor man—for he is thinking not so much of the earth and the beauty of growing things, as of the price of wheat and the cost of labour, and so the fields which lift me up by their beauty, weigh him down, and he is gradually sinking under the soil, is perhaps already buried. The beautiful fields afford him little satisfaction whose mind, in place of being merely leavened by the practical is swamped by it. He sees the Canada thistles and wild carrot in the wheat, the daisies in the hay-

fields, as so much loss to him, but he does not see that the cares of the world are the tares which are destroying his own life. Very likely when he looks abroad he is thinking not of the sunshine on the wheat but of the mortgage on his farm. He is losing his life in order to gain a living; he has sold himself to the devil. Such is the evil state to which the pastoral man tends in modern times and from which the nomad was ever free.

We have almost come to assume that this is as unavoidable as death. So have our wants increased that most men to-day are getting a living at the cost of their lives. Some good folk are about to improve the condition of the farmer, but let them look first to their own and discover if they themselves are alive. I have no rules for the farmer and merely would intimate that our relation to the soil is much more profitable than he usually makes it; that he would get more out of his farm if he were not buried under it; that the fields will yield a great many crops in the year without exhausting the land if the planter does not put all his energy into corn and wheat but cultivates some finer crop in himself. If he plants only corn, he will reap only corn. So I say to the farmers—what are you sowing?

For the charm of the pastoral life is great to such as have a free mind—whose minds are not mortgaged; but they, alas, are oftenest nomads and not pastoral men at all. To one who is not under the soil but above it, the golden wheat, the bending rye, the grey frost of the oat-fields, and the silvery sheen of the young barley all suggest the bounty of the great Mother, and the prevalence of beauty. The elms, some dome-shaped, some slender vase-like forms rising from the fields, the hayricks and sheaves of wheat, the browsing cattle and pasturing sheep, the classic vines beside the lake, the reddening apples on the trees—the very harvesters themselves—are part of his harvest who gleans in every field, taking the best of every crop, which the reapers leave.

That discipline of the fields implied by cultivation is typical of the systematic direction of the mind which insures the best results in us. It is an age of trained effort, yet one has but to glance at the early Buddhists, or at the Stoics, to observe how much more highly than we they disciplined the moral nature and the thought-forces;—and that, it must certainly appear, is the fundamental cultivation—that the heart should be right and the

reactions of the whole mental and nervous machinery normal through training and habit. Thus comes the greater freedom and not through the uncontrolled ways and wild moods of the nomad.

Intelligent discipline is surely the keynote of the developed life—the scientific treatment of the soil and of the seed that we should produce wheat and not tares. The modern world sees how it applies to commerce; it does not see, what the early Buddhists knew, that it applies to life itself—that it is the secret of profitable living. Nowadays we are not living so much as getting. We should make the journey worth while, having ventured upon it, and despite the freedom of the nomad, it is evident that the unalterable destiny of man shall draw him towards the perfect and systematic control of his forces, for it has placed happiness and peace in that direction. Thistles sowing themselves in the wheat, the spreading mustard in neglected fields, suggest the accumulative force of habit—for these are but habits of the undisciplined fields. Though Paul plant and Apollos water, it is God alone who gives the increase, and we cultivate the garden and restrain the mind to the same end,—that they shall be better mediums

for the expression of that which is not of them but of God.

Now the savage philosophers [says Dr. Eastman in referring to his boyhood among his people, the Sioux] looked upon vengeance in the field of battle as a lofty virtue. To avenge the death of a relative or of a dear friend was considered a great deed. My uncle, accordingly, had spared no pains to instil into my young mind the obligation to avenge the death of my father and my older brothers. Already I looked eagerly forward to the day when I should find an opportunity to carry out his teachings. Meanwhile, he himself went upon the war-path and returned with scalps every summer.

Here is the rank and savage soil of the human heart, the same soil which in the thirteenth chapter of Corinthians is brought to the highest cultivation.

And he [Ananda] let his mind pervade one quarter of the world with thoughts of Love; and so the second quarter, and so the third, and so the fourth. And thus the whole wide world above, below, around and everywhere, did he continue to pervade with heart of Love, far-reaching, grown great, and beyond measure, free from the least trace of anger or ill-will.

And he continued to pervade the world with thoughts of pity, of sympathy, and again of equanimity, according to that very ancient

Pali text which has reappeared among us like some rich and fertile soil of the Paleozoic era, brought to life by the action of time and the elements. We have in us the possibilities of the Sioux warrior taking scalps, of the Hindu sage seeking peace. It is the same mind-stuff in us all, which in the savage runs to tares, in the sage to wheat.

CHAPTER VI

HOME AND WORK

WHILE the nomad in us is at home under the sky wherever night overtakes him, the pastoral man requires to be housed. Indeed, the pastoral stage finds its culmination in the idea of home, a spiritual concept at which we are long in arriving; for many never go beyond the idea of a *house*, and of these a good part live in their houses like spiders in a corner or mice in the attic. How many men do you know who are as free and unconcerned as nomads in their tents? It may be that the ancient cliff-dweller of Arizona was better off than the modern cliff-dweller in New York, for while he had no conveniences, he enjoyed more freedom from care, the greatest of inconveniences.

To the Bedouin and the Navajo the desert is home. In a sense Nature is home to the poet and to the naturalist, but the artificial man feels himself to be homeless unless he is

housed. It is true that civilisation has made us more comfortable within doors and more sensitive to the discomforts of life in the open. If one has not lost sympathy with Nature,—the mountains, the forest, the sea, where they are it is homelike. If I am more sensitive to the air of the house than to the weather, it is the result of long coddling in the woods. Most houses are stuffy places in which one accustomed to air is well-nigh asphyxiated. To seek shelter at night, however, after a day out-of-doors, is no more than the wild creatures do, and if the human burrow is lighted and lined with books and pictures, in place of being a dark and dismal hole—that is merely where the superior animal enjoys an advantage.

While my burrow attracts me at night as more congenial than the great hall of the universe dimly lighted by the stars, what house in the morning can compare with this delectable study, living-room, and library which I have under the hemlocks? The trunks of conifers are the most beautiful order of architecture and that best adapted to my needs; one as sympathetic as it is reposeful, offering always and everywhere a silent welcome, so that I enter the woods with that sense of security and ease which comes from being at

home. It is a living-room, for here one can *live*; a library, for it is full of records; a music room wherein the melodious family of Orthoptera and many sweet-voiced little birds solace and entertain one. Moreover, it is an excellent dining-room, a practical kitchen, and answers very well for a bedroom on occasion—fresh and fragrant and musical with chirping crickets and whispering leaves. It is never dusted or swept, yet is always fresh and inviting. Nothing ever gets out of order. The carpet renews itself and the furniture does not wear out. The sense of privacy is not disturbed by the nuthatches who circle the tree-trunks but rather augmented by the presence of these woodsy beings. Oven birds steal in and out and warblers flit here and there, no more interrupting one's train of thought than does the soothing cadence of the white crickets in the grape-vines.

It is perhaps only natural that under these pleasant conditions I should be given to reflecting upon the advantages of so commodious a study. One is beset indoors by insidious mental germs. A house is a little box full of stale thought which seems seldom to be renewed by fresh and invigorating currents. These germs do not thrive in the open air and

thus life in the woods is more conducive to mental health. It is easier to change the mind, to refresh and renew it, when less exposed to the contagion of other minds.

[It is because men have so much indifference, if not fear, in place of a true sympathy, a love for sky and mountains, for birds and butterflies, for trees and flowers, that they are so little at home out-of-doors.] They are too often suspicious, as if they believed Nature to be covertly their enemy, lying in wait to poison or to secretly strike them with rheumatism, fevers, and colds. The attitude is an ignoble one which does not invite friendship. If we cannot have harmony in Nature without trust, how much less between four walls and between two persons. Home is a composite state of mind. If you contend for a more material and tangible basis, it appears that you are talking of a house merely, for home is a state depending upon character and disposition and, unless the spiritual factors are present, it is as impossible of realisation as a chemical reaction without the necessary elements.

Home, then, may be regarded as the culmination of the pastoral state of man. Yet a great many persons are busy reforming society while they do nothing to establish this

basis of society—their own homes. They froth at the mouth, they boil over and make themselves ridiculous in their efforts for suffrage, for temperance, and for something called religion; all are in a frenzy to put a roof on the structure whose cellar no one has yet dug. If I am not on the housetop of the community screaming with the rest, it is because it has seemed to me of more importance to put a foundation under my own house and this occupies my time. Home stands also for privacy, [and privacy is one of the cardinal virtues. If any one cultivates it, none, of course, in an age of cheap publicity, will know what he is about, but he will enjoy his privacy all the more as something rare and priceless and may even attain to obscurity, one of the greatest of blessings.]

Sorrow and experience—grim words—are but means, it may be, for subduing that old savage in us and thus justify themselves. Above all, children are ministers to this end, though we may some day discover that they in their faith and innocence represent the human species in its prime, while we are but children gone to seed, having exchanged faith for a little cynical knowledge of the world. However, the savage race is to be transformed

into a race of angels and we must go through all this in order to return to the child's estate. Evolution is the plan, and evolution is a troublesome affair. Yet what a goal to be realised here on earth: not a house, merely, but a home pervaded by a sense of peace; something ineffable, a haven of refuge in the midst of turmoil, a glimmer of reality amidst all the shows. Whoever enters a home shall be aware of a certain divine quality in the atmosphere, something superior to the common air of houses, and he shall rest and time be forgotten. He has there a taste of heaven which is but another name for home—a permanent camp somewhere on solid ground by a perennial spring.

A second fruit of the pastoral state is toil: toil to maintain the house which the nomad is content without. Yet this toil, grimly associated with an economy that dwarfs the man to a pitiful machine, is the inception of the most exalted motive: work, and the love of the work. Only the rich, the rich in spirit, in feeling and capacity, are able to work, and whoever loves his work is of necessity rich. Do not suppose that the lot of him who miserably toils only to keep the body alive compares with the free life of the nomad, who has

no need of the things that crush the life of the poor pastoral man. Yet when that pueblo man at last rises to the dignity of work, he uncovers within himself a more splendid estate than any of which the nomad on the desert has ever dreamed, and of which he holds the key. When I look at the toilers groaning at their task, almost I am persuaded that the wilderness is the place to live and the wild free life the true life. So many educated toilers work for money only, or work because they must. Rather would I be a Sioux following the trail of the blacktail and the wapiti, an Apache whooping on the desert. When once in an age I have encountered one of the elect, working at that which his heart has prompted him to do with a sort of mystical devotion, it was to feel myself in the presence of a man set apart from other men by the immense dignity his work conferred upon him.

It is the misfortune of the average man that his labour deprives him of the capacity for dreaming—leaves him no time for reflection, no inclination to earn, not bread, but the bread of life, to lay up treasure that corrupteth not. Verily with all his labour for possession, he remains poorer than the nomad who is

his own master and can labour, if he be so disposed, for that which endureth. [If you would create you must dream; it is first the idea and then the embodiment. The great dreamer becomes the master builder.] If many do but hopelessly drivel and accomplish nothing, while others miserably grind, inspired by no vision, why so do a thousand nuts become food for squirrels where one becomes a tree. Let a man say to himself, "I will be that one" and leave the rest to the gods.

When it comes to the question of wages, again the pastoral man signs away his freedom. If you must toil, you must, and so much the worse if you acquire only bread by your toil and not a little wisdom and character as well; but in these fortunate days, he who, having a sufficiency, works neither for the love of the work nor for mankind, is not so much a rich man as a poor fool. If there is one more favoured than he who has found his work, it is he who in addition is able to work for nothing, for he thus receives the highest salary the world pays any man—independence. "Make thy wage zero" expresses a wisdom so high or so deep it has always failed of recognition. Thoreau at Walden perhaps came nearer to realising it than most men.

From this transcendental view of work as one with the man, no more can be said of any one than was spoken of Audubon:

For sixty years or more he followed with more than religious devotion, a beautiful and elevated pursuit, enlarging its boundaries by his discoveries, and illustrating its objects by his art. In all climates and in all weathers; now diving fearlessly into the densest forest, now wandering alone over the most savage regions; with no companion to cheer his way, far from the smiles and applause of society; listening only to the sweet music of birds or to the sweeter music of his thoughts, he faithfully kept his path. . . . Led on solely by his pure, lofty, kindling enthusiasm, no thirst for wealth, no desire for distinction, no restless ambition of eccentric character, could have induced him to undergo as many sacrifices, or sustained him under so many trials. Higher principles and worthier motives alone enabled him to meet such discouragements and accomplish such miracles of achievements.

We are poor creatures with our desire for recognition and applause. It is poison, this love of publicity, which finds its way to the brain and makes a man foolish. A few men have so loved God that they have escaped this child's disease. They who hasten their work the sooner to sip this poison of a cheap

fame, pay for their folly by losing the only fruit worth picking, the love of the work itself. No money will compensate for this loss, while whoever gains publicity pays dearly for it. After forty, if one has lived and knows of what little value are men's opinions, it is only the work itself that counts.

To be sure, we must "get on in the world," and if some do it at the expense of the rest, so much the worse for all concerned. If it seem essential to you that compensation should be a factor in any complete scheme of life, rest assured the gods thought of it first and will doubtless take care of that part of it. Doubtless, also, they will produce a man now and again to write a perfect poem, another to paint a perfect picture, and a third who shall consecrate himself to Truth and who shall love Truth above all things. If these men seem to be poorly paid, it is because the world has so little with which to pay them:

 Their treasure not the spoil of crowns and kings,
 But the dim beauty of the heart of things.

If a man go fishing and have nothing in his basket, it is still possible he has brought back some prize he does not reveal, or that

the trout was but a pretext. It is said that Turner refused on occasion to sell his pictures and that Maupassant remarked to Dumas: "If I were rich enough not to be obliged to write, my dream would be to write one more book, a short one, at which I should always continue to work, and which I should order to be buried on the day of my death."

If it should prove that I am only dreaming under the pines, dreaming that in a lifetime—or two—the wage shall at last reach zero, at least it is a more agreeable dream than they have who have never worked for love of the work. If the fragrance of pine needles inspire this—what wine can do as much? It is a great price to pay for a house and respectability—so much care and toil, so much restriction. Nothing less than home and the love of the work will ever compensate.

CHAPTER VII

COMPANIONSHIP

WHAT flavour has life to one who, unlike the artificial man, has made himself at home in Nature while nonetheless emerging from a purely nomadic stage into the estate of the cultivated mind? It is this question I have set myself to answer, not in a book, but rather in a life, of which any book can be but a meagre record.

He will have first an increased sense of companionship, and if any should accuse me of undervaluing human society because of the somewhat solitary character of these reflections, it must be remembered that this is not a journal of human friendships but of friendship in Nature and of one side of my life only—my solitary life in the open. If it has seemed worth while to record these impressions and meditations, it is not in the belief that the companionship of Nature is a substitute for society but that it is as worthy to be enjoyed,

a solace to the quiet scholar and a refuge from all that is mean and low. It is true, however, that Nature yields us exactly what we are fitted to receive, and only to a mind companionable in the most exquisite sense does she yield herself fully. In other words, we find ourselves in Nature. A mind thus keyed is perhaps fitted for a very fine companionship alone, and much that engages others may seem neither sufficiently deep nor sincere to satisfy its ideal.

Human society we take for granted: we need not at the same time take it for granted that it is the only society. Squirrels perhaps refer to us as inferior animals—as *not* squirrels—awkward creatures unable to climb trees; while birds may regard us as monstrous untuneful beasts. A dozen novels are written every week to prove how good or how bad society is: there is not room for anything more to be said on that subject. I would like to intimate, by way of variety, how very good I have found the company of birds; what true friends the mountains have been for many years, and how companionable the woods and streams. This outdoor society has such distinctive charm that time and again it has caused me to forget all that education in trifles has emphasised.

The sad thing about ourselves is that men, crowded together in the gregarious life, are yet sundered by impassable gulfs of racial, social, and personal antagonisms. We have made of life a social and commercial struggle, and our relations with people are often vitiated and insincere because of the selfish and ulterior motives which govern society. This will be of little moment to those who think the cheap prizes offered are worth competing for. He who does not, will naturally distinguish between what appears of value and what does not. It is usual to assume that this continual struggle is the appointed condition of human life, whereas it is merely self-imposed through centuries of habit and we have thus made our communal life less agreeable and more irksome than it might be were it not for ourselves. We do not sufficiently distinguish between the "man-ordained" and the "heaven-ordained," to quote once more our Chinese sage.

To the recluse who lives at his club and never goes into the woods, something might be said on the advantages of a cosmopolitan social life that shall include birds and bees, trees and flowers. If one has friends in the East and in the West, living, some upon the desert, some on the mountains, others again

in pleasant valleys, to leave old friends here is only to join old friends there, and he will have no reason to be lonely. It may seem to those who have not cultivated this companionship as if Nature had no such companionable traits, and this is not to be wondered at when we consider how rare it is for people of one nationality to understand sympathetically, let alone arrive at any friendship with those of an alien race. How then should they understand Nature which has become so alien to the artificial man? Nothing emphasises this fact more than the pathetic effort to read human motives into animal conduct. It is very possible we would regard an archangel with distrust and an entire lack of sympathy, as in fact we did when one happened to alight in Palestine a few years ago. Can any good thing come out of Galilee—or Missouri—or any nation, state, or county but our own? How then should we appreciate the life of a bird, so remote from man's, actuated not by human, but by bird motives?

If you would make acquaintance with the ferns [writes Thoreau in his Journal], you must forget your botany. . . . If it were required to know the position of the fruit dots or the character of the indusium, nothing could be easier than to ascertain it; but if it

is required that you be affected by ferns, that they amount to anything, signify anything to you, that they be another sacred scripture and revelation to you, helping to redeem your life, this end is not so easily accomplished.

Much more if you would have the companionship of birds must you put away the egotism with which you were born and the reverence for the schoolbooks which you have acquired and see to it that you possess those qualifications that commend themselves to birds. It is the most exclusive society in the world, and to be received you must proceed in precisely the opposite manner to that which you adopt in human society. Instead of aiming to secure favour or attract attention by your learning or accomplishments, you will endeavour to suppress yourself and escape attention, and in proportion as you succeed in this are your chances good of being admitted to this circle.

[The peculiar charm of the woods is the result of an indefinable reaction by which we are relieved of certain states of mind induced by the sight of man and all his works. We lay these aside as we put off our fashionable clothes, and go comfortably clad and with a certain ease and freedom of mind. That which

is difficult in society is natural and easy in the woods: namely, to be oneself.] Such being the case, whoever enters, unwittingly presents his credentials and if that self be noisy or commercial, or anything but well-bred according to sylvan ideals of conduct, he makes no headway in that society no matter how far he may go into the forest. A silent and distrustful company observes him from its seclusion with frigid aversion. The very trees scorn the vulgar intruder. Nature is a perfect reflector, and whoever approaches with a hostile or selfish attitude is met on his own ground and receives antagonism for antagonism.

You may think when a bird has eaten from your hand that you have at last attained to a certain intimacy, but you have merely brought the bird around to your way, you have not brought yourself to its way. We must meet the wild on its own terms if we would learn the savour of the wild. Nature yields one set of impressions to the scientist, another to the merchant, and they perhaps assume that that is all she has to give; but there are some to whom she whispers in the ear that which they never divulge. The childish egotism which assumes that because we do not understand the speech of other animals, there-

fore they have no speech, is grasshopper logic: as if the grasshopper should reason that as we have no wings to scrape together and no ears in our legs, it is evident that we are deaf, and manifestly impossible that we should possess a language. Well, we *are* deaf to much that concerns us and have ourselves but the rudiments of speech. We understand neither crickets nor angels, and have ears only for our own patois and the gossip of the village.

How can I tell why the mountains are companionable? Perhaps it is because of some mystical quality in them; perhaps merely my attitude of mind. That which sustains these inert masses of granite and schist, also sustains me like a thistledown in space. On the Arizona and Mexican deserts I find myself more than ever looking towards the distant mountains which seem to draw mysteriously, as if the core of every mountain were a sort of loadstone attracting men out of their little course into a new and cosmical orbit. Ponderous as they appear, nothing is more elusive than they, receding in the distance and wrapping themselves in diaphanous garments of light. How calm they are—as the dead are calm. Like a vast writing on the wall of the heavens they say to us—Peace!

Be still. There are but two characters in history I can revere as I can a snow-peak, and no others that so habitually command me to look up and to press on. Yet this is perhaps but falling in love with a symbol—as most religion is—whereas philosophy is the perception of the thing symbolised.

It is easier to explain why ponds and streams are companionable. It is as if a lake were an eye in which could be read the moods of an unseen presence. How dull is some company; how terrible some dinners; how rarely do we find a society that charms us out of ourselves and causes us to forget time and live for an hour in eternity! So much dreary prattle of servants and diseases, politics and money, me and mine! The nearest pond among the hills affords more stimulus to thought and to the perception of beauty. I drink deep of that eternal blue of the lake; bathe my senses in it exulting; drift and float on the azure waters and refresh that part of me that else would droop and pine. That celestial beauty restores the vision as the repose of the hills strengthens the heart, assuring me that truth and beauty are one. They announce the living God in the most fitting terms.

A friend of many moods is the brook, a

personality all grace and freedom and beauty, all music and laughter and light, that beguiles and soothes and solaces with many tongues in an idiom which has never been translated. Here is a friend who is ever responsive and has always something to say worth attending to. Now in October a sort of enchantment hovers over the glen because of the mellow haze, the radiant state of the maples and hickories—brilliantly lighted chambers in the dark galleries of the hemlocks—the leaves detaching themselves and falling to earth one by one, the autumn reverie of crickets, the wild melody of a ruby kinglet, and the thin tremulous notes of the whitethroat. Yet at all seasons a stream seems to dominate its environment and to fill a glen, a ravine, a canyon, with its presence, such is the mysterious power of water. This particular stream does so by no aggressive show of energy for it is a shallow brook, a winsome personality, the very opposite of those virile masculine little rivers of the West. Rather does it pervade the glen by a sort of feminine charm, attracting hosts of violets, trilliums, and adder's tongues to its banks in spring and carrying in autumn a vast fleet of miniature sails—maple, birch, and elm leaves—down its enchanted length, past the

vineyards at its mouth, and out upon the lake, dreamlike in the October haze.

Trees themselves are peculiarly friendly. Clumps of little maples and aspens give the impression of cheery and social beings. The autumn glow which they emit suffuses one like the emanation of a sane and cheerful mind. One cannot be downcast in such company. An element of the wild is wrought into the fibre of the conifers. Spruce and hemlock, like the woodpeckers, never become domesticated and commend themselves by this very wildness, seeming to dwell in an atmosphere of their own and somehow to be far removed, like a cathedral or a temple. Among them I am inspired to thoughts of a subdued and impersonal character—cathedral thoughts. Singing softly together, or chanting heroic songs of the forest, they are more truly musical than we, for they utter no discord. They do not speak for themselves but merely respond to the wind. In thus becoming the voice of the wind, the tree reminds us of that which we are prone to forget: that man himself is no more than the visible and temporal instrument of an unseen and eternal presence.

Never having essayed to make human friends of birds, I have aimed rather to acquire

the bird's point of view, so that such companionship is not an imaginary one derived from attempting to humanise them, but an actual friendship wholly sylvan, with all the elusive charm which belongs to the wild alone. To tame the wild is to destroy all that is peculiar to it. It is certain that very few people know the real flavour of the woods, just as few travellers perceive the exotic spirit of foreign countries. We wish to make everything like ourselves. We would Americanise everywhere; and we would humanise the woods till they are as commonplace as the town.

Against this spirit of mediocrity I find myself making common cause with the wild. I do not wish to see the country improved, but to improve the taste of those who will not let Nature alone. Nor do I wish the birds to act in any more human way than they do but to remain the shy creatures they were intended to be. I am drawn to them for their bird ways and bird songs, and they who are unconscious of God reveal the wisdom of the Most High far more than do His advisers here on earth. These little people do not speak of their complaints nor do they gossip about their neighbours, nor even deplore the impermanency of things as do the philosophers. To

them life seems good; their occupation is agreeable, and though industrious they find time to sing. They are great travellers, yet appear to be at home everywhere and are not affected by the discomforts of the journey. Above all, they are retiring and modest, and in place of proclaiming their habits and their exploits, leave you to find out for yourself if you are able.

The peculiarity of this relation is that it is racial rather than individual, and yet this does not seem to affect it in the least and leads one to wonder if our relation to each other is as personal as we assume it to be. Every year I greet the warblers, yet each time may be the last I shall ever see those particular individuals. This occasions me no concern for I seem always to see the same bird. It is in reality the race rather than the individual which we know, and they are racial and family traits and not personal ones at all that endear the birds to us. If we are drawn to certain birds in preference to others it is because of something admirable in their racial manner and song. Aside from the voice it is largely a matter of temperament. If you happen to know both the hooded and Scott's orioles you will know why I prefer the latter: the same is

true of the cactus- and canyon-wrens and of the California and green-tailed towhees. The ruby-crowned kinglet, the water-thrushes and the ouzels, like the loon, the wild goose, and the ruffed grouse, are the living embodiments of the wild and this gives them a place in the affections none share with them. How different is the association with the song-sparrow, catbird, and robin, equally congenial in their way. Chickadees and nuthatches are not less my friends than cardinals and Carolina wrens, but for quite different reasons, and no other race of birds can in any way take the place of the thrushes.

It is surprising that writers on birds have said so little of companionship: as if we should write of people as interesting and more or less attractive beings but fail to refer to them in the light of their social qualities. It leads one to suspect that the society of birds is not appreciated. Yet there are many excellent families among them and the satisfaction of meeting now and again bird friends in California, Arizona, and Mexico—relatives for the most part of old friends here—is quite equal to any other that travel affords. The same is true of our families of plants. If I go West it is to greet the yucca and the madroño, the

manzanita and the audibertias and not for my health; to see again the golden fields of bæria and to revel in the lupine and the eschscholtzia; to enjoy once more the impressions that the phlox, the cyclamen, and the larkspur yield their friends, and to behold the very spirit of the West embodied in the castilleia and the mariposa.

There are as good grounds for staying at home in season to observe those fragile blossoms, the most ethereal product of the year, which come to us like beautiful thoughts—and only to those who have such thoughts perhaps: for people who have not the right kind of eyes cannot see flowers, nor can the unmelodious hear music.

This is the philosophic bearing of our relation to Nature and of all relations. Let us be friendly and Nature is friendly; interested and she is interesting. A love of beauty discloses beauty everywhere. Therefore be yourself what you would have Nature be to you. Attention is a master key. If you are attentive to birds with all your mind and heart you will see birds and see them in a more familiar light than others do. How hardly shall they who are distracted by the cares of the world enter into the kingdom of Nature.]

"It is, I find, in zoölogy as in botany:" says Gilbert White, an excellent observer though an uninspired man, "all Nature is so full that that district produces the greatest variety which is the most examined."

Only the good observer knows what a revelation the nearest pasture has to make, but if he would receive the whole message he must be a poet as well. Few men of temperament and of ability as observers have the leisure to regard Nature in the divine way. They are driven to observe more and more commercially or pedantically until at forty the poet in them is dead. Thoreau and Jeffries were the rarest kind of men. Some sensitive natures complain of the times. "Of what use," they ask, "to uphold ideals of Nature or of art, when everybody is in too great a hurry to listen and people care only for money?" Be this as it may, if they forego their ideals it is they who suffer by an injury to their own minds. Instead of paying heed to the oracle we are for ever thinking of what some one will say. There are no Spartans; there are no individuals. We live in swarms and do things for the sake of applause and not for love and principle.

You will see a great many persons whose

lives are poor, whose resources are few, longing for money, for leisure, for friends. Soon they will depart thinking it a poor world because they missed the road. We have inherited a very beautiful estate and if any complain that they have no share in it, let them remember that whereas some men make a great ado about their possessions, this garden with its mountains and deserts belongs by an everlasting decree of the gods to those who have in themselves the capacity for appreciating it—to those who enjoy the companionship of Nature. After looking at other estates on other continents I have concluded that we have here the most beautiful of all—and that we are most indifferent heirs. Possibly it is because we have been spoiled by too many toys, for we are promising children. Our toy automobiles, balloons, and banks so absorb us for the moment that we have no time to enjoy the garden. But children go through all sorts of queer phases and are obliged to try a great many things in order to learn that they are not worth while.

“The Japanese,” says Hearn, “discover beauty where we blindly imagine ugliness or formlessness or loathsomeness—beauty in insects, beauty in stones, beauty in frogs.” For

more than eleven hundred years, it seems, they have been writing poems about frogs.

Although most kinds of Japanese frogs are croakers [says he], there is one remarkable exception (not to mention tree-frogs),—the *kajika*, or the singing frog of Japan. . . . In these times the *kajika* is considered as one of the singers of spring and summer; but formerly it was classed with the melodists of autumn; and people used to make autumn trips to the country for the mere pleasure of hearing it sing. And just as various places used to be famous for the music of particular varieties of night-cricket, so there were places celebrated only as haunts of the *kajika*.

This association of the Japanese with Nature, so intimate and significant, affording so remarkable a contrast to our own indifference, is worthy of profound attention.

There are charming references to singing insects [writes Hearn again, who has much of interest to say on this subject] in poetical collections made during the tenth century, and doubtless containing many compositions of a yet earlier period. And just as places famous for cherry, plum or other blossoming trees, are still regularly visited by thousands and tens of thousands, merely for the delight of seeing flowers in their seasons, so in ancient times city dwellers made autumn excursions to country districts simply for the pleasure of hearing the chirruping choruses of crickets and locusts,—the night singers especially.

Centuries ago places were noted as pleasure resorts solely because of this melodious attraction. Somewhat later, probably, people discovered that each of the principal species of singing insects haunted by preference some particular locality, where its peculiar chanting could be heard to the best advantage; and eventually no less than eleven places became famous throughout Japan for different kinds of insect-music.

Surely [he continues] we have something to learn from the people in whose mind the simple chant of a cricket can awaken whole fairy-swarms of tender and delicate fancies. We may boast of being their masters in the mechanical—their teachers of the artificial in all its varieties of ugliness; but in the knowledge of the natural,—in the feeling of the joy and beauty of earth,—they excel us like the Greeks of old.

How many in this country know the names of two species of dragon-flies? Yet "Old Japanese books profess to name about fifty kinds; and the *Chufu-Zusetsu* actually contains coloured pictures of nearly that number of dragon-flies," while "For more than ten centuries the Japanese have been making verses about dragon-flies; and the subject remains a favourite one even with the younger poets of to-day. The oldest extant poem about a dragon-fly is said to have been composed fourteen hundred and forty years ago, by the Emperor Yūriaku."

Of this poetry he remarks:

Of course these compositions make but slight appeal to æsthetic sentiment; they are merely curious, for the most part. But they help us to understand something of the soul of the elder Japan. The people who could find delight, century after century, in watching the ways of insects, and in making such verses about them, must have comprehended better than we the simple pleasure of existence. They could not indeed describe the magic of Nature as our great Western poets have done; but they could feel the beauty of the world without its sorrow, and rejoice in that beauty, much after the manner of inquisitive and happy children.

These children, unlike ourselves, were devoted to natural objects, having no mechanical toys with which to play, and such children are always the happiest.

Hearn enumerates eight species of *semi* or cicadæ commonly recognised and distinguished in Japan by the character of the sounds they make, and twelve species of musical crickets that are sold by the insect-sellers of Tokyo.

Perhaps it is only to minds inexorably haunted by the Riddle of Life that Nature can speak to-day in those thin sweet trillings, as she spoke of old to Solomon.

The wisdom of the East hears all things. And he that obtains it will hear the speech of insects—as Sigurd, tasting the Dragon's heart, heard suddenly the talking of birds.

Nature may be herself *maya* or illusion but she has the power to free us from the illusions of the world and restore a wholesome and sane view of life. This result is a negative one—a *dehypnotisation*. It is profitable, therefore, to listen to the *matsumushi* and the *suzumushi*, the *kana-kana* and the *tsuki-tsuki-boshi*; to watch the play of light on the iridescent wings of dragon-flies, and their eyes like globes of gold; in early spring and autumn to lose oneself in the woods and become a bird, a tree, a floating leaf upon the ponds.

CHAPTER VIII

MEDITATION

THIS companionship and close affinity with Nature involves necessarily a certain abstraction from the world. My business being in the woods, if I tend strictly to it, I am seldom to be found in the house: a detachment from affairs which at least makes it easier for the mind to give itself to meditation if it be so inclined. To one who desires above all to see clearly, it appears that tranquillity serves this end. If man is normally the agent of a higher Will, it follows that he should aim, not so much to act of himself as so to regulate his life that it may act through him. Self-will and the flux of opinions only serve, therefore, to obscure his perception. Before indulging in any speculations concerning the nature of life and of the universe, let us spend some time on that by means of which we are to form our opinions. It is the fashion to proceed in the opposite manner and to be

at great pains to express views on philosophical questions without ever having prepared the mind for reflection. The mind thus let loose, as it were, without training or preparation is soon adrift and there is not time in the brief span of life for it to return and rest within itself, where it would have been more profitably engaged from the first.

It thus often happens that men who are most opinionated have in reality no opinions at all of their own. They merely "catch" the prevailing notions by a sort of wireless contagion—and there is usually an epidemic of one kind or another. These epidemics appear to be propagated in waves in the mental atmosphere. Every once in so often comes a prohibition wave, or a mad dog craze, or a yearning for virtue; the village and the town are beside themselves and the good people feel moral impulses, a fear of dogs, or a loathing for alcohol because every one else does. [Now it happens at such times that most people see things out of focus and not ten men in any community are really thinking for themselves. Nor is it merely in such epidemics that ideas become contagious, for the average man is dominated by the world-thought; it is not he who thinks or speaks, but the world-thought

which thinks and speaks through him. Add to this the advice of the well-meaning and the perpetual hypnotism of the newspapers and no one is allowed to make up his mind for himself—if he has one.]

In my outdoor study where the hermit thrushes peer at me gently, approaching so close at times that one can almost touch them, while the brown creeper utters its fine tenuous note, thin as a hair, from the trunks of the hemlocks, my mind, if not troubled within itself, is free to reflect upon some things which concern it and perhaps able to see them in a true light. If we can solve but few problems in this life, we can at least arrive at some general conclusions that bear on the solution of all problems.

We are constrained by an inscrutable destiny to regard never the thing in itself but to for ever speculate about our ideas of things. Take, for example, the threadbare question of the existence of matter, which Christian Science has caused to reappear for the hundredth time in the history of Thought. Granted that it exists, all we can possibly know are our sensations of matter and any discussion of the subject should be prefaced by an acknowledgment of this limitation. It is

the lot of few men to be more quoted—or misquoted—and less read than Berkeley. Berkeley's main contention was that the world had and could have no existence independently of a percipient mind. He denied the existence of any substratum of matter, as much as to say, there is a percipient mind but no object of perception; while the materialists practically assume that there is an object of perception only and no subject to perceive it. I am not concerned with this discussion, for if there is no matter, we can evidently do without it: its chief interest lies in the fact that while the mind is, by its very nature, unable to know matter in itself, both sides persistently overlook this. The weary discussion reminds one that there are no discoverers but *rediscoverers* merely, and that the ancient Hindus, Chinese, and Greeks postulated over and over again all that Europe and America have since *repostulated* with such a flourish.

It affected me as might the footprint of a prehistoric man, to learn that in ancient India when Sanskrit was the language, they had a thorough-going psychology. There were Sanskrit words for *afferent* and *efferent*, for the principal nerve centres, while the relation

of thought to the mechanism of the body through these centres was also recognised. The unearthing of Egyptian tombs full of dead men's bones was of slight interest in comparison to this, for here was not a tomb but a mine still rich in ore. Well, we have at last arrived where *we* admit that the mind has a relation to the body, and if we do not forget it again we may perchance now begin our long delayed inquiry into the nature of man.

Nothing perhaps could better engage a philosopher than that he should know himself. We may excuse ourselves for not remembering where we came from and for not knowing where we are going, but that we do not even know what we are, and that our education does not yet supply the lack, should at least cause us to reflect. What is man, to be sure; and if the White Queen were to awake where would we be? I detect in myself a passing current of thought, flowing before me even as a brook. But who is this invisible *I* who rests on some unseen bank observing the stream of thought—the procession of the *mes*? It is evidently not the object of knowledge at all, not that which is known but that by which all is known; not what is seen but the light by which we see. This all-knowing but

unknown Soul, one with the supreme Knower, is what the theologian proposes to save, and this he expects to accomplish through the agency of some one of the ephemeral *mes* which the Soul observes from its vantage, as one watches a soap-bubble detach itself, become iridescent with the reflected light of the sun, and vanish.

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a phantom. Yet all that endures is unseen. As for the phenomenal, we know only our sensations of it; had we but three senses how different would it appear, and had we ten, how unlike again. Give me another mind and you give me another world. I cannot prove I am awake, nor have all the sages in all the years done any better.]

Formerly, I, Kwang Kau, dreamt that I was a butterfly, a butterfly flying about, feeling that it was enjoying itself. I did not know that it was Kau. Suddenly I awoke and was myself again, the veritable Kau. I did not know whether it had formerly been Kau dreaming that he was a butterfly, or that it was now a butterfly dreaming that it was Kau.

How do I know [asked Chwang Tze] that the love of life is not a delusion? and that the dislike of death is not like a young person's losing his way, and not knowing that he is (really) going home?

Those who dream of drinking may in the morning wail and weep; those who dream of wailing and weeping may in the morning be going out to hunt. When they were dreaming they did not know it was a dream; in their dream they may even have tried to interpret it; but when they awoke they knew it was a dream. And there is the great awaking after which we shall know that this life was a great dream. All the while the stupid think they are awake; and with nice discrimination insist on their knowledge; now playing the part of rulers and now of grooms.

It appears that I am for the most part merely trying to interpret my dream; yet I aim in time to do more than this,—even to awake, for how can we hope to interpret fully a dream that we are still dreaming? There is a legend of Krishna which runs in this manner:

A certain young man was walking among the hills with Krishna, when the latter, indicating a village in the distance, requested his companion to fetch him a bowl of water. Accordingly he set out upon his errand and coming to the village paused at the first house.

Now it happened that a young girl came to the door and the two fell to talking, whereupon the youth became so enamoured that he speedily forgot the object he had had in view.

So it came to pass that he tarried in the village and married the girl. Time went on and children were born to them. Years passed, when there came a great flood, the village was washed away, and the man found himself struggling in the torrent to save his children. At length, unconscious, he was borne along on the flood.

When he regained consciousness, it was to find himself again alone in the hills with Krishna, who asked:

“Where is the bowl of water, my son?”

Somewhat the same implication have the allegories of the Indian prince, and of the prodigal son, without the metaphysical subtlety of this tale of Krishna. They seem strangely to agree with some unreasoned conviction that we are not native to this world or what we call this life, but are in reality inhabitants of another sphere. In music, in poetry, in philosophy, in love, we have intimations of the true life; as sleepers rubbing their eyes for a moment are dimly aware through their trembling eyelids of the light.

What if it should appear that instead of hypnosis being merely a pathological state for the consideration of medical societies, we were hypnotised more or less continuously from birth to death? Have you never lost your head because of a pair of eyes, that you deem this so incredible? To be born is to be hypnotised: first by the light of day and by a mother's voice, and thenceforth by many things following in order, by strange beliefs and by little maids; to say nothing of the most persistent influence of all—habit. When a rosy light falls across the stream of consciousness the world is rose-coloured, and if a shadow falls upon it the world is dark—even

as the brook is now in sunshine, now in shade. And what trifling events and insignificant persons are sometimes the cause of these changes!

The world is an appearance, and our laws, our customs, and our creeds, for the most part, rest on mere opinions which change with the climate and the age. We are perpetually celebrating, yet nothing remarkable has ever happened or ever will. Is it a tunnel? Worms have tunnelled for ages. A flying machine? Any beetle can do as much. A strong man? He has not the strength of an ass. A wise or an honest person? He merely represents what we all should be. A pile of money? It only serves to buy us a little hole in the ground at last. The senses are soon worn out and the stomach too if we think too much of it. Most men will change their opinions by tomorrow, and of those we counted nearest, some, alas, will have died; others will have been hypnotised by malicious tongues, or by some crotchet or other, and will be dead to us.

Yet in spite of this, if we have health we believe in the good heart of man. To do so is an indication that the glass is in focus. Such a little span; so much tribulation; how can there be an insincere man anywhere? How

can men forego this good heart to play such a mean little rôle? It is all a part of the illusion, by which man is arrayed against himself in mankind. To be kind is to be awake in one part of our nature at least—the best part perhaps. To be anything else in such a world is surely hypnosis, though it go by another name.

So it comes that I am engaged in the study, not of hypnotism, but of *dehypnotism*, finding that more important; and for this reason philosophy is the most profitable of all pursuits. If you are hypnotised in the ordinary acceptation of the term, sweet may seem bitter to you, heat, cold, and pleasant and painful sensations be interchanged. Now one who is subject to the general but unrecognised hypnosis is equally confused with regard to many things and it is impossible for one in that state to distinguish reality from illusion. Pleased with a rattle and tickled with a straw, he is oblivious to the spiritual facts which stare him in the face. If we dealt sincerely with one another half the business that is now carried on would fail. The truth is, we love to be humbugged. Sleep-walking is the common state of man.

If any man awake, however, and rub his

eyes; if he concern himself with the facts of life rather than with the gossip of the village, he shall certainly see a new earth and shall find that life, that man, are better than they seem. All depends upon whether we live from below or from above; whether we have a worm's eye or a bird's eye point of view. The mountain is so different from opposite sides. [Concerning this the desert has much to teach, for next to life itself it is the greatest object lesson in illusion. On the desert, beauty seems always to lie in the distance; as in life, it is not to-day but some to-morrow which attracts; not what we have, but always that which we have not. The future hovers on our horizon like the mirage—itself an empty dream.] Time and again I have seen one peak resolve itself into two—sundered by miles of cactus plain; or a range appear to revolve upon its axis and what had been a solid wall become a series of detached peaks rising like islands from the desert. What had become of that lava peak? What has become of my facts of twenty years ago? A day's ride has shown me they were mere appearances. Other facts have loomed upon the horizon. Doubtless some of these will disappear in another day's ride but some will remain—peaks on

the desert, mountain chains unsuspected in the early stages of the journey: and as the desert changes with the light, so do the old facts appear to be changed because of a new light.

CHAPTER IX

RICHES AND POVERTY

AGAINST the purple mass of the Carolina woods a thin blue wreath of smoke ascends in the quiet air. Here and there a magnolia or holly shows among the leafless oaks and sweet-gums that skirt the branch, while far across the sandy fields are the pines, and beyond, the impenetrable swamps of the Santee, still sheltering the bear and the wild turkey. These great purple masses are the walls of my camp—mysterious walls which do not shut in. With the hermits I have migrated thus far for the winter, to be nearer the sun and to be with the birds. This fire is not merely to warm the hands, it is an altar where I burn incense, and the smell of that fat pine wakes an ancestral joy. If any man will live a natural life and learn to seek satisfaction in the harmony of his own mind, he cannot fail at length to see how much cant is preached on the subject of riches and poverty.

He may even conclude that in some cases people have things strangely mixed. You may regard these pages, then, as the confessions of a rich man, for I have come to consider myself in that light, while, as few others do, I have escaped the annoyances that usually attend that state.

If one has contentment, the source matters not so much, provided you grant that a true contentment is possible only with sanity and kindness. Neither vice nor selfishness is capable of producing it. Since all things are relative, if a man feels rich on a thousand dollars a year, he is without question richer than he who feels poor on a thousand a month. As for pleasure, there is only about so much to be had and you can use it up quickly in dissipation and find it soon resolved into pain, you may prolong it by moderation, or like the ascetic you may do without it altogether and discover another sort of satisfaction in being superior to pleasure. Contentment, however, is not likely to result from any extreme views of life or conduct and is rather the flower of a well-balanced mind, a philosophy of moderation, and a firm trust in God. He who has not the disposition to count his blessings—however few they may seem—will

not easily be contented, for he will always imagine happiness to lie in the possession of something he has not. It is a commonplace delusion and he should at least have plenty of sympathisers.

[If you have the habit of being inwardly grateful for the air and the sunshine, for the hills and the sky to refresh your vision, for a sound sleep and a good appetite, for a discerning mind and a good heart, you are sowing the seeds of contentment.] If you have also an efficient sense of humour, you may look for some degree of success. Remember the child's pleasure in shells and acorns, and think of the peevish child surfeited with toys.

If I have still some satisfaction in living, it is because I have stuck to my shells and acorns and you will by no means persuade me to forego them in order to acquire superfluities and weary myself in the pursuit of pleasure, only to become as discontented as you. A house and garden, some books, bread and butter, and a purpose in life—pray is there anything else to be had anywhere on this earth? These are the essentials, and yet what do even they amount to if one does not also possess himself? At times I have been equally content in a log cabin, in a tent, on the bare

ground. As for a library, there are but two or three hundred books in the world, and as I have more than that number, some of these are superfluous. I value only those in which I have made an investment in the form of thought and feeling; they alone are *my* books.

Similarly I value a violin, for I have to some extent invested myself in it. As an instrument it is so nearly unconquerable and yet yields such large returns that it is one of the best of all things to try your mettle on—to discover your own depth, how much you have to express, and how great is your determination to express it. Music is the language of a higher race and whoever can speak it correctly and with some elegance enjoys a little conversation—with angels, perhaps, beings concerned with beauty alone. A house, a garden, a book, a horse, a violin are all things to try yourself on; they are not wealth, but opportunities to demonstrate and make effective your own wealth. They return only what we put into them.

This will give some idea of the character of my securities, but foremost among investments to a naturalist, as a matter of course, is Nature, which invokes so many sides of a man: she calls out the philosopher and the

poet in him, the artist, the scientist, the explorer, and the planter. I have an investment in the birds and flowers of North America which has yielded large dividends; an investment in every strip of woods and in every pond and stream, and year after year reap some profit.

There is no better seat than a log in the woods, and while it is comfortable enough its chief advantage is of a subtle character—a certain power to transport one to an enchanted world, not of marble palaces, but of woodland quiet. Only those whom the genii serve are thus carried away. I have more than once sat upon a log with some intruder in the woods and found myself sailing along while he remained stolidly behind. From my log I have observed the home life of birds and their racial and family aversions and prejudices; have watched their expressions and read their simple emotions. I have come to have a feeling for plants so that I sometimes *sense* them, which is merely the result of associating various types, not only with each other but with certain natural environments and also with their insect visitors. Yet some people wonder what there is to do in the woods if you do not take a gun.

In such a world as this the balance of objective and subjective elements in our mental composition has much to do with wealth. If you look at life with seeing eyes you are fairly well off. If in addition you are able to make much of what you see, you are indeed a rich man. To be rich is to have a rich mind, and if you have not this, do not harass yourself: you will die poor in spite of all you can do. But if you possess wealth within you may sit on your log and take some comfort in your thoughts, for already the world is yours.

What nonsense they talk about wealth who have so little capacity, so little understanding of the nature of riches that they can think of nothing but money. You may count on the fingers of one hand the men you know who can really be said to have any possession in the woods, who own anything more than the deeds. All labour to acquire property, but not one in a million is working to attain that understanding and appreciation which alone can make him its possessor. The poor have such an exaggerated idea of the value of money. It is worth the largest salary paid to any individual to enjoy and cultivate his leisure, and if he receives less money for his

time than do most men, he is paid in peace of mind, in freedom from care, in interest and companionship.

I have already referred briefly to my homestead—a plot lying between the Atlantic and the Pacific. The law by which I established my claim requires that I *live* on it and that I shall not despoil its forests, its birds, or its plants; that it shall be handed down to my heirs in as good condition as it was received. As our spendthrift youth draws to a close we must now consider that enforced economy which goes by the name of conservation. We shall be able to save a remnant of our estate in Nature—our wild garden; and in passing laws compelling our children to pay for our extravagance we shall perhaps save them from their own. It is more or less of a delusion to speak of ownership in Nature, since shallow minds are unable to see aught of any consequence. Hence to boast of possession often merely reveals a real poverty. The cynical and uncharitable, again, do not see that the dwindling of themselves, the shrinking within, means a corresponding shrinkage without: for let a man grow mean and the world grows mean also, but let him expand and the world shall keep pace with

him. We see ourselves in Nature as in a glass.

The merchant takes account of his assets and his liabilities but few take account of themselves in this way. While others put down these assets which have to do with getting a living, the philosopher should reckon up those which have to do with living itself. There is nothing to disturb me in my devotion to this business of life these winter days. The hours pass as quietly as the brook slips over its sandy bed through the canes. In the crisp air the blaze is acceptable to the hands, yet the ants are at work on the edge of the cotton fields and now and then a blue wasp appears, nervously running over the ground, prying into the crevices for spiders. I hear the guttural call of red-bellied woodpeckers, the whistle of the titmouse in the tree-tops, and the superb voice of the Carolina wren ringing in the swamp. A buzzard circles above the fields as he climbs the sky in his wonderful spiral, mounting higher and higher by a serene and effortless flight. Phoebes and hermits, towhees and thrashers, winter here with juncos and song-sparrows, and to be among them is to have congenial society.

Why is it that so few men pursue life for its

own sake? It is perhaps true that in England there are more who are so constituted and so privileged that, having leisure, they can devote it to things of the mind—a mark of an older, richer civilisation and of a heritage in culture. Surely we also shall come to it as time weans us from vulgar and commercial ideals and we outgrow this crude and preparatory stage; we shall manifest that reverence for beauty, for scholarship, and for sound culture which is a sign of maturity.

What is it, then, that makes life worth while to one who must live deeply if at all, who needs a larger sop than the cheap pleasures and inanities of the world? Perhaps the largest asset any man can have is a true purpose in life, one that sustains the heart in him and keeps the faculties alive, one that pulls him along and keeps him breast forward. Ah! the love of the work, the good work! They have missed the essence of life who have not this. "If heaven had lent me but five years more, I should have become a true painter," were the last words of the dying Hokusai—one of the master workmen of all times—then nearing his eightieth year. He was a rich man who could leave the world with that thought.

The love of Truth—the passion for the eternal Truth for itself alone—is of a piece with this, albeit too impersonal to satisfy any but rare natures. It is the master passion of the twice-born alone. Very few men cultivate the habit of walking with God, or have any inward assurance of God. They have merely heard pious rumours of such a personage. These rumours have given me no comfort; but now and again in the years, sometimes with little children, sometimes alone under the sky, I have experienced the Divine Presence, have felt that the great comrade was here, and those have been the richest hours of life. I have walked with the Master a little way in the silent fields—with the only master.

What is a man worth to himself? Most men are insolvent, and yet life is rich enough. Like the mountains, it is full of ore for the prospector who can locate the veins. Some of these bankrupts inquire as to my purpose in riding over the desert and sauntering in the woods. Well, I am looking over my *property* and locating new outcrops on the old vein: counting my gains, it may be, while they sit at a desk and add up their losses. To sell yourself is a poor bargain, no matter what the price paid. To arrive at middle

age with no resources but money, or very likely not that, is a bad showing for even a dull clerkly man. What is it worth to be your own master? I find that to be its own compensation and one too great to be resolved into figures: to work at the work after your own ideals; to come and go when you will and by no man's favour; to say what you honestly think. If you would know the price of this freedom, it is that you have dominion over your own mind, and again that you so love the work that you need no compulsion, no incentive but that love itself.

The pastoral man gives up his ancestral freedom that he may accumulate money and be considered respectable. That inheritance our progenitors have gradually wasted for some thousands of years in getting themselves civilised, but it is still possible to reclaim some of it, for we have paid too high a price for civilisation. If you have made a poor bargain like the rest, it is perhaps not too late to assert your rights. But if you are fond of pretense and wish to impress your neighbours, you will continue to drag your ball and chain. Pray, do not suppose, however, that it is invisible. Of course you are weary of it and groan in spirit, but vanity is a wonderful salve.

The stream glides with faint music under the red-gums and magnolias and there is nothing more beautiful in the world than the shimmer of sunbeams and the glint of pebbles, the murmurous song and the rhythmical flow. Through the leafless branches the sky shows blue as on the desert. In the distance some tall pines apart from the rest suggest, by their slender trunks and round heads, cocoanut palms. Suddenly a blue-headed vireo comes peering through the branches and I feel the old thrill of surprise and pleasure at an encounter with a wholly unexpected bird. Bubbles glide with the stream and vanish. It is wonderful that we can miss so much by the wayside, our minds on some bubble on the stream of life. The world is an asylum for the deaf and blind. Now and then arrives a master who opens the eyes of some and unstops the ears of a few, but he soon goes on his way again. You will see men with children and no time to play with them; books and no time to read; men with no purpose in life, no love of the work, no love of the Truth—and these are the poor of earth whom we have always with us.

I once heard an old scout who was somewhat of a poet speak of his "bronco soul."

The stamp of the desert was on his face and I knew that sometime he had walked with the God of the Open. He was thinking of the ethereal mountain ranges, opal and mother-of-pearl in the enchanted distance: of his estate under the broad blue sky, where the snow lies on the peaks and the cliffs are red and yellow. And I knew that we had an investment in common in the free life—in life itself.

CHAPTER X

STOIC AND EPICURE

WE have come to assume that Stoic and Epicure are terms applicable to some ancient schools of philosophy, whereas we reflect these views to-day, as we are optimists or pessimists, as a result of perfectly natural causes, and whether we have ever heard of Zeno and Epicurus or no. Now the effect of an outdoor life is certainly to make one an epicure in a sense of which indoor folk have no conception, and perhaps stoical and indifferent where others are self-indulgent.

Sequestered in remote mountain villages, without comforts and without society, I might at times have been counted a stoic for I found myself indifferent to the lack and fairly satisfied with a diet of beans and bread: for here is the test of stoicism—how independent can you be of the external world; how much self-reliance have you? Can you do without luxuries, without comforts, without companions,

and still be content? When I examine into my state of mind, however, it is evident that I was no stoic in the true sense of that word, but merely stoical in some things in order to please my fancy in others. I gladly put up with beans and bread, and a hard bed, for love of riding in the mountains, for the stimulus of adventure, for the opportunity to study birds and botany and a primitive and picturesque people, and to be all day under the sky in a perfect climate and in a beautiful country.

In the city, however, I must perforce be a stoic to endure such glare and noise, so much superfluous eating and drinking, and the continual sight of so many imprisoning walls, such overwhelming mass of mediocrity and ugliness which chills the heart. To behold this dismal spectacle, to put away thoughts of bluebirds and wrens, of the beautiful silent desert and the companionable woods, and to be content, looking for the good that is to be found there—that may be regarded as the true spirit of stoicism.

Surely after one has sailed the seven seas and beheld the seven wonders, encountered a few clever people and a host of dull and commercial ones, witnessed the best plays

and the worst, and read of everything that can possibly happen to any one, and a great many things that never could, over and over again, he should be ready to rest for an æon or two, aware how little it all amounts to compared to a ray of sunshine and a quiet mind that can enjoy still waters and green pastures and needs no artificial stimulus that it may get through the day without thinking of suicide. It is evident that a life of much society, whereas it polishes the manners and sharpens the wits, greatly increases our wants; while a life in the woods at least has this merit, that it decreases our wants, sharpens the eyes, and gives a new and enlarged interest in natural things. It makes for simplicity—the tendency of all outdoor life—and for sanity. Now the essence of Stoicism as a philosophy of life was simply this—to live in conformity with nature and to abide by reason. Happiness is the outcome of a rational mind and a will in harmony with the Supreme Will. Virtue is its own reward: virtue is in fact simply reasonableness. External goods are more or less superfluous since they can add nothing to the Soul. We shall be indifferent to things, to fate, to whims and foibles of mankind. We shall take care to act only the part assigned

us, namely, that of a reasonable being, and to be reasonable is to be kind, to be just, to be tranquil and uncomplaining. "One's own mind is a place the most free from crowd and noise in the world, if a man's thoughts are such as to ensure him perfect tranquillity within, and this tranquillity consists in the good ordering of the mind," wrote the wise emperor; and again, "Look inward, for you have a lasting fountain of happiness at home that will always bubble up if you will but dig for it." A doctrine of self-trust surely—an heroic doctrine, a creed for strong men.

[You are to be yourself a reasonable being, a kind and just man, no matter what others may be; you are to be indifferent to things and events—to the props and crutches of the vulgar and of the weak—and find your solace within and in the eternal Reason which sustains and directs us all.] It is good mountain air; it is cold water in the face; it nerves and braces one like a martial strain. How vulgar and effeminate seems the life of eating and drinking, the life of cheap pleasure, of considering one's ailments and other people's faults, when this Spartan life sounds in the ears.

The old Stoics made much of resignation

to the inevitable, as the early Christians of submission to the Will of God, an excellent attitude in either case, but both overdid it. As the pious attributed a great many things to Providence that were in reality the result of their own folly, that to which they really became resigned was not so much the Will of God as the ignorance of man. So the Stoics regarded as inevitable some things more or less subject to the will of the individual and which may be changed for the better. It is of course a nice problem in philosophy to discover just what is subject to the will and what is not, but certain it is that the domain of the will is enlarged since the days of Zeno, a change in which psychology has had some share, while the strictly inevitable is proportionately less. But the submission to the higher Will in the confidence that such must of necessity represent the absolute good is now, as then, the beginning of wisdom. Any philosophy worthy the name is but the study of this appointed order and the acting in conformity with it.

The stoical attitude will ever appeal to what is manly in us, the epicurean to the effeminate, and one who rides and walks much will incline to be a stoic, at least while he rides and walks, even though he turns epicure when

he comes into the house again and yields to the seduction of the table and the sideboard. In camp there is a satisfaction in simple fare and cold water; so great a satisfaction indeed that one soon becomes epicurean in regard to these. Simplicity becomes a luxury; the consciousness of self-reliance a luxury; indifference to the world a luxury. There is no escape for one who is bent on living, and for such a one it is difficult to be a stoic. I must go to the city and live in a hotel if I would really practise an austere self-discipline.

Perhaps it only amounts to this, that the common necessities are all-sufficient to a mind in accord with Nature and requiring no artificial stimulants. There is, moreover, considerable satisfaction in *not* wanting things, in *not* wishing to be amused, in the independence which this attitude implies. But like everything else, it may be carried too far, and it is carried too far when it interferes with a genial and sympathetic state of mind. The severe pleasures of self-denial tend to render character as hard and inflexible as self-indulgence makes it soft and effeminate, hence let us be genially independent and not dismal ascetics. We have true satisfaction only in what we are; strength is always joy, weakness

always misery to its possessor. I am befriended by that character I have and this is the real ground for practising some austerity in life and welcoming that condition which brings this to pass. It is a training for a race, a girding up of the loins that we may do battle. He who steadfastly loseth his life in some particulars shall add to his character and shall find his life in ways worthy of a man. This is not less a stoical than a Christian doctrine and the idea of some savages as well. The stoical principle appears in each; the conception of the good to be derived of course varies. Witness Dr. Eastman's account of the training of the young Sioux:

It seems to be a popular idea [he says] that all the characteristic skill of the Indian is instinctive and hereditary. This is a mistake. All the stoicism and patience of the Indian are acquired traits, and continual practice alone makes him master of the art of woodcraft. Physical training and dieting were not neglected. I remember that I was not allowed to have beef soup or any warm drink. The soup was for the old men. General rules for the young were never to take their food very hot, nor to drink much water.

Again he says:

All boys were expected to endure hardship without

complaint. In savage warfare a young man must, of course, be an athlete and used to undergoing all sorts of privations. He must be able to go without food and water for two or three days without displaying any weakness, or to run for a day and night without any rest. He must be able to traverse a pathless and wild country without losing his way either in the day or night time. He cannot refuse to do any of these things if he aspires to be a warrior.

Sometimes my uncle would waken me very early in the morning and challenge me to fast with him all day. I had to accept the challenge. We blackened our faces with charcoal, so that every boy in the village would know that I was fasting for the day. Then the little tempters would make my life a misery until the merciful sun hid behind the western hills.

I cannot recall the time when my stern teacher began to give sudden warwhoops over my head in the morning, while I was sound asleep. He expected me to leap up with perfect presence of mind, always ready to grasp a weapon of some sort and to give a shrill whoop in reply.

Let the mollycoddle ponder this. Still more significant is his account of his first offering, a truly Spartan episode.

Seated in the teepee, the old grandmother exhorts the little boy in the name of the Great Mystery to give up that which is most dear to him, as the fit offering of one who desires to become a warrior.

"I know," she says, "you wish to become a great warrior and hunter. I am not prepared to see my Hakadah show any cowardice, for the love of possessions is a woman's trait and not a brave's."

The boy is fired by the appeal to his manliness, and never for an instant thinking of his dog exclaims:

"Grandmother, I will give up any of my possessions for the offering of the Great Mystery. You may select that which you think will be most pleasing to him."

It was hard for Uncheedah to tell the boy that he must part with his dog, but she was equal to the situation.

"Hakadah," she proceeded cautiously, "you are a young brave. I know, though young, your heart is strong and your courage is great. You will be pleased to give up the dearest thing you have for your first offering. You must give up Ohitika. He is brave, and you too are brave. He will not fear death; you will bear his loss bravely. Come—here are four bundles of paints and a filled pipe—let us go to the place."

When the last words were uttered, Hakadah did not seem to hear them. He was simply unable to speak. To a civilised eye he would have appeared at that moment like a little copper statue. His bright black eyes were fast melting in floods of tears, when he caught his grandmother's eye and recollected her oft-repeated adage: "Tears for woman and the war-whoop for man to drown sorrow."

Here is fit training, if not for the pastoral man, then for the warrior. But every man born of woman is destined to war—to that long conflict in which he shall essay to become a self-conqueror. Such discipline would make your fat and greasy citizen more acceptable in the sight of the gods. The day comes when each of us is called upon to give up that which is most dear—an offering to the Great Mystery. He gave; he takes again. Who is prepared to renounce with the fortitude of the young savage?

Certainly it is salutary to regard with contempt too much coddling and the love of pleasure—sign of some primeval vigour of mind. When I am in the saddle and the mountains beckon in the distance, much that people call amusement can make no more appeal than it does to the horse. The sun and the air stimulate sufficiently. The enchanted distance is my panorama, my stage; living, my occupation, and it is a fairly good one. Watching my thoughts is a pastime and it is entertaining enough. To be what Stevenson called “just happy thinking” is a frame of mind that affords more real comfort in life than any other.

If an outdoor life inculcates some stoicism

as a matter of course and breeds contempt for effeminate pleasures, it yields, to some temperaments at least, truly epicurean delights as well. Epicurus, you will remember, while he made pleasure an end, was far from entertaining a vulgar idea of it. Pleasures that ended in pain were to be despised, while those of the intellect were superior to those of the senses. It has often occurred to me in reading Thoreau's Journal that while his stoical qualities were somewhat exaggerated in the eyes of his contemporaries, his epicureanism was entirely overlooked. He enjoyed, for instance, a companionship with Nature such as few men have ever known—a deep and cultivated friendship, truly a great factor in the sum of happiness. He had, moreover, a friendship with the present which is equally rare, since most men are taken up with “dead yesterday” or “unborn to-morrow.” While others were postponing, he was living. Again, he experienced satisfaction in his own thoughts, which came to him like good fairies in the dawn and in the dusk. If he had little, he had at least the compensation of the philosopher in wanting little and being free from the multiplicity of cares which burden the less fortunate. Lastly, he had leisure, one of the

greatest of all blessings to the contemplative mind. The pleasures of this stoic of the woods were of the intellect. He not only denied himself the pleasures of the senses but in a large measure the joy of the heart, and in this he played the part of the ascetic. It is so difficult to follow the middle path; so easy and so human to overdo our point of view.

Of epicureanism in the woods I can speak with some relish. Indeed, I am obliged to have a care lest I become sated with the silence or with the seductive charm of bird voices, with that cosmic emotion which is joy in spring and sadness in autumn, with colour and light, with the spirit of the earth and of the sky. If one cultivates this sensibility, the character of the topography, the flora, the birds, the season of the year and the hour of the day, the quality of the light and the appearance of the sky, all minister to this taste and supply endless impressions—fugitive, changeful, inexplicable. He may find himself in the forties with an unabated relish for Nature, the same susceptibility to this mysterious magic-play that he felt at twenty. Of no other illusion is this true, and as for most of them—how faint is their call as the years go on.

Perhaps it is the very living out-of-doors, the wooing of the silence, that has taken the zest out of the life of being amused: but if I have sold all my goods for a single pearl, it is with the assurance that this pearl outweighs the world. It has proved a good bargain, yet it was made because the fates compelled it—made by one in a dream, only to find he had dreamed the immortal truth. When men talk of their beloved trade it would be of no use for me to tell them my business is on a larger scale and is concerned with eternal and universal things; that I deal in Truth and find it more profitable than their feeble ventures. As for *property* of which we hear so much, if I should tell them my estate extends from Canada to Guatemala and of the satisfaction I have had in familiarising myself with it—they would not in the least understand. How poor would I feel if I did not own the mountains and the desert—as poor as the rich themselves.

Let any sane man divest himself of the hypnosis of the artificial, and instantly sunshine and brooks, trees and birds are sufficient unto him. He may thank his good fortune, who, like the child, is content with the earth. Look around you in the first house you enter

and see how many useless and tasteless things there are: yet somebody wasted his time and energy to acquire them. Look around you in the woods, however, and you will observe the work of an artist, all in perfect taste and with no superfluities, and be thankful, if you may, that you have still an uncorrupted eye.

If now you have also an uncorrupted nose and palate, or, let us say, your senses have been restored to their natural state after a period of corruption, you will know there is nothing in the shops to compare with balsam and pitch-pine, with bayberry and sweet fern, and you will relish, above all, the wild flavours of cherry birch, wintergreen, and sassafras—the wild flavour of life itself. You will find the air of the mountains a sufficient tonic and the mere sight of an antelope or blacktail, or a leaping trout, the best stimulant in the world. Let one lose his eyes and what would he not give for a sight of the fields at which so many gaze with indifference; or what would the cripple give for a walk in the woods? I would have these things remain to me like a cup of water in the desert. To enjoy the simple act of breathing pure air is an epicurean delight. Yet this is rated very low by your artificial man who must invent pleasures for himself.

If you have red blood in your veins you have already discovered the nature of my epicureanism; but if you are a wax doll I cannot explain myself to you.

CHAPTER XI

OPTIMIST AND PESSIMIST

MOST men are credulous with regard to the authority of some book or person and often enough skeptical of God for they show, plainly as may be, their lack of faith by the character of their prayers. There are those again who, while they might profess to believe that this fire, for example, does not exist, would proceed comfortably to warm their hands. This is not skepticism, but pure sophistry. Yet not to doubt the evidence of the senses is sign of a dull and somnolent mind. Some are so morbidly suspicious they accept nothing; others so foolishly credulous they believe the newspapers. Let us inquire into the nature of an honest skepticism, which is a desire to settle questions of philosophy as far as possible on their own merits, relying on the facts or, in their absence, upon the experience of life in so far as it applies to the case in hand, and never on tradition or authority. The

appeal to authority is the sign of the credulous and unscientific mind. Your true skeptic cites opinions and may be influenced by them but is incapable of regarding any man's opinion as a fiat of the Lord God, no matter in what book he may find it. If some Simon or Peter declare the moon to revolve about the earth, well and good; but if he affirm the moon to be made of green cheese, we must conclude that he has been misled. Yet we have been solemnly assured by a number of persons that the moon *is* made of green cheese, for the very good reason that this same Simon or Peter affirmed such to be the case. Religion is justified not so much by the worship of God as by the uplifting of man and the liberation of the human mind from the shackles of fears and beliefs. The only enemy of man is nescience, and to overcome this should be the object of religion no less than of philosophy—continually to overcome it in the mind, as the sun dispels the mist in the atmosphere. Surely darkness is dispersed by light and by light alone and yet by a strange anomaly our religion is unscientific and our science is irreligious. I am not skeptical of Truth, but of what man assumes to be truth; nor of life, but merely of that dream which we call life; nor

yet of God, but only of that creation of their own imagination to whom men address their vain petitions. The sophists are the largest school to-day as they have ever been. As for Christians, of whom we are pleased to say there are so many millions, there are in all probability not one hundred—not ten—veritable Christians in Christendom.

Consider for a moment the cant we endure in the name of religion, the fads in the name of philosophy, the militant vulgarity calling itself reform, and the selfishness and deceit associated with business, with politics, and with society—we who at heart are not thieves and humbugs but men preferring the good to the bad. People who see only this are naturally cynical and such is the lot of young and hypersensitive persons of native sincerity, and of old and disappointed men who have worn life threadbare in the restricted area in which they have lived. But if we adjust the vision to a larger field we shall discover that the weed patch which so distresses us is not the whole universe but a little corner of it merely. We see through a glass darkly indeed, through the dark glass of nescience. In the records of hypnotic experiments, conducted by qualified observers, is much that

serves to elucidate our usual state of mind and bring it into relief. Take, for example, the hypnotic subject who under a corresponding suggestion becomes unaware of a person actually in the room but assumes the presence of another who is not there at all. Do *we* not fail to some extent to see that which exists and imagine we see much that has no reality—we who are the subjects of a world-hypnosis? Again, in cases of multiple personality, have we not a sort of exaggerated instance of what is more or less common to mankind in a form so mild and so general as not to be recognised? Have we not several selves, each creating for itself a world after its own fashion—none of them real—and do we not lapse insensibly from one to the other? In view of this we should get at the facts of life by patient study and not hastily conclude to be optimists or pessimists because of certain prejudices of our own which are readily mistaken for facts.

It should be the aim of the philosopher, at least, to divest himself as far as possible of his own or any personal bias, to make due allowance for temperament, disposition, and accidents of birth, environment, and circumstances and then to look at life as one who has

ascended a mountain studies the topography, that he may see clearly and decide on universal grounds as to whether life is good or bad. We are not to conclude because *we* have been cheated that all business is dishonest; or because *we* have made a failure of marriage therefore marriage is a failure; or because *we* have failed in life that life itself is intrinsically wrong. This is precisely what the vulgar are doing everywhere, and certainly the philosophic mind cannot better occupy itself than to put aside the whole mass of ill-considered opinions and endeavour to establish its view on a rational ground. If a congress of moles should assemble to consider the theory of light they would without doubt decide the existence of light to be a delusion, basing their decision on personal experience. Now there are mole-like minds that have concluded from their own dark state there is no light in the world, and how shall one convince them to the contrary? Or how shall I convey to this lizard basking in the sun any idea of the association a camp-fire has for me, or of the pleasure I have in the liquid call-note of the thrasher in the green briers, the warble of a bluebird in the cotton fields? He can conceive only of lizard experiences, as the

mole of mole experiences, and beyond this nothing exists for them. Nor is it so different with men, for the human mind readily crystallises into certain types and loses the power to conceive of anything foreign to its narrow range. Such minds are manifestly unqualified to entertain any rational view of life as a whole and can only refer to their particular mole or lizard experience of it.

A man of excellent disposition toward mankind and a true friend to the needy was nevertheless wont to say that he believed nothing he heard and very little that he saw. He was not far from right—and he knew the world like a book. Not only are there many insincere persons, but among the sincere few are capable of relating what they have heard or seen without unconscious modifications or embellishments. The senses are unreliable and, even so, few are trained to make the best use of them. Add to this the fact that we rarely perceive anything but in reality *apper-*ceive, and this apperceiving content of the mind is modified by inheritance, temperament, and education, while the objective world itself is an intangible and elusive affair which baffles the scientist and for which he can only find adequate expression in the terms of higher

mathematics, and it is evident how mysterious and inexplicable is our relation to the world in which we live. For any knowledge of this mystery we are dependent upon a deceptive medium for which we cannot even make positive corrections as in the case of scientific instruments.

[In our dealings with people, too, we discover how variable are their opinions. Things and events appear not as they are but in accordance with the age and the moods of the observer. Ulterior and selfish motives govern society and govern nations and the excuse of any one is that others do the same.] He is a wise man who knows whom to trust, and an absolutely sincere and disinterested person is discredited by the majority, who are unable to comprehend this rare phenomenon. Society is pitiful and ridiculous in every age. Some Lucien or Aristophanes, some Cervantes or Bernard Shaw discovers the fact now and again. *We* do not see it—how should we? But posterity will be greatly shocked—or entertained—by an account of our doings. Even so you and I must realise that the trouble is chiefly with ourselves; that we help to make it what it is and must play our part good-naturedly and with a fellow-feeling for those

who are acting with us the same drama. Let us assist any who have forgotten their parts and bear as patiently as may be with those who rant upon the stage.

Nevertheless, we must grant that society is better than it was; that in spite of the selfishness of the world there is more true charity than of old and the average of intelligence has risen, if slowly. To-day, in this country, the poor are better off than ever before in the history of the world. If they still have wrongs to redress, so have their employers, and the only formidable enemy of either is the demagogue who stirs up strife. Higher wages, shorter hours, the ballot, the free school, and a hundred conveniences his bog-trotting ancestors never dreamed of—let the sentimentalist honestly compare this with conditions in any age of the past. Perhaps the most unfortunate of all are the sons of the very rich, and when the poor are able to show compassion for these children of misfortune for whom circumstances have made success so difficult of achievement, they will be growing in wisdom and virtue. We have always assumed that the rich should compassionate the poor while no one has suggested that the poor should show some sympathy for the rich; yet

how hardly shall a rich man enter into the kingdom of heaven—and who is there to help him?

To see the white man, actuated by wholly selfish motives, overcoming the inferior races and appropriating their territory is not an agreeable spectacle, and good-hearted people are cast down; yet white man and black are but unconscious agents of a Power that moulds the destinies of mankind. There is much cant concerning the fate of subject races, inasmuch as the political freedom of the white races consists for the most part in being ruled by despots on one hand or politicians on the other; while if we but look at the subject dispassionately we must admit that the heathen benefits on the whole by the selfishness of his Christian subduer. Do you suppose for an instant that the dreaming Hindu, from the beginning of time a prey to the despots of his own race, ever could govern himself with an approach to the equity and justice with which the English with their excellent administration govern him in their own interests? Study the condition of the native African tribes and you must admit that, in spite of Congo atrocities, the Christian occupation of Africa is the only hope of relieving the black savage

from Mohammedan oppression. If we have not done well by the Indian—how did the Indian tribes deal with each other? With the condition under which the various tribes occupied this country it was only a question of the survival of the fittest, and the fittest was the most savage. We lament the fate of the Aztec at the hand of the Spaniard, but what did the native races of Mexico not suffer among themselves from their own barbarity? Evils carry their correction like a worm in the bud. The good God is ever at work, though His ways are past-finding out.

If you despair because of the suffering in the world, look about you and see who are the men and women to whom you can turn and upon whom you can rely. In whom do you look for character, those who have known suffering, or those who have led a comfortable and pampered existence? Do you admire the selfish and self-indulgent people you know? Let us not forget we were put here to grow, not merely to await death, and character is not developed without adversity, nor is strength until it is tested. If we live long enough we must conclude that most of the things we have done and which are commonly regarded as important factors in life are in

reality not worth while in themselves. Yet we feel with good reason that they contribute to the making of a man,—that he must experience them in order to discover for himself their worthlessness and also that he may better understand his fellow-man. Let him take part in the play and we will allow him to retire if he will; but not to know the world, save from hearsay and from books, lessens his worth as a man in our eyes. We do not value advice about bringing up children from people who have no children, and the views of life of a man or a woman who has never married are likely to be somewhat narrow and defective. They have failed to attend one of the most important schools life provides for the education of mankind. How can any man understand life who has not been in love or who has never set himself to overcome serious obstacles? If he has not done these things and done them with a will, I would rather listen to the peep of a chicken just out of the egg than to hear his opinions. While travel—like love—is not all it is assumed to be, it is an excellent tonic for the myopic village eye which sees little things magnified, and is thus justified in its results in stimulating the intellect rather than in any intrinsic value.

Good people who wish to make the State guardian of our consciences and to put temptation under lock and key are little versed in the school of life. Temptations overcome are bone and sinew to the strong. As for the weak, they will have strength only in overcoming. The fact is, the reformers have concluded that the gods do not know their business. Then let them cry with Omar:

Oh, Thou, who Man of baser Earth didst make
And ev'n with Paradise devise the Snake:
For all the Sin wherewith the Face of Man
Is blackened—Man's forgiveness give—and take!

True pessimism is the result of taking life as man has made it for the real life, as if the schoolboy were to imagine living to consist in construing Latin and were to regard it—naturally enough—as a dull and sorrowful affair. On the other hand, men are usually called pessimistic who do not endorse the artificial ways of society. From this point of view it must be admitted that Jesus and Buddha were the foremost pessimists of all times. Jesus found little good here below and no hope for the rich and prosperous. That we should renounce the false in order to find the true was the burden of that ancient oriental doc-

trine he preached—a doctrine essentially pessimistic as regards the world, for which he had only contempt. His interest lay entirely in that spiritual life which he believed it his mission to proclaim and in regard to which he was assuredly an optimist. Of that divine life—made real to him by a sublime faith—Christians are more or less skeptical, and generation after generation of men have pinned their faith on the senses and the glitter of the world and one by one arrived at the same disappointed and cynical old age.

It happens thus, that the philosopher is concerned chiefly with investments. It is his business to study the conditions of this venture and to discover wherein and to what extent a man should invest himself in the securities offered. It behooves him, like the wise banker, to counsel conservative investment and to denounce speculation. To the eye of wisdom, judging life by its fruits, what pays? In order to ascertain this, life must be judged by the facts and not by appearances merely. It is very true that most things are a matter of opinion but it is pure sophistry to affirm that *all* is a matter of opinion. There are unalterable truths as there is a pole-star from which to take our bearings. Grav-

ity acts without reference to opinion, and laws of life and laws of the mind operate eternally though men ignore them. We have before us a problem underlying which is a definite and eternal principle, as capable of solution—difficult though it may be—as any problem, when the principle is known and applied.

If you assume, as do many, that there are no points of the compass, you will naturally drift on the high seas and may any time run on a reef; again, if you have mistaken your direction you will not find yourself until you have your true bearings. But he who knows the pole-star and takes his course by it will escape the shoals and find himself in time, never fear. We cannot live in the world without seeing much that is mean, yet let any man honestly weigh himself in the scale with others and he will conclude that the true way for him is first to remove the beam from his own eye. Who knows how it would appear if we could once do that—if we could see clearly! Surely we must believe that man is not essentially bad but essentially good, and that he is dreaming here, for ever and anon we see that better self lurking behind the mask. We are warmed by the goodness of the human heart

and stirred by the immense possibilities of man. This suffusion of oneself with an impersonal love is an intimation of the true life for which we are preparing here in our larval state.]

If we judge this larval experience to be final it may appear a failure, but any man whose perceptions are broadening and deepening, who has gained a little in wisdom to know fact from appearance, reality from illusion, will regard life hopefully and will press onward. Slowly the green world ripens like a winter apple.

Our times are in His hand
Who saith, "A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half; trust God; see all, nor be
afraid."

CHAPTER XII

THE MIDDLE PATH

AS sparks from my fire set the dry pine needles ablaze, so are we dead grass to some thoughts and ignite as they fall upon us; wet moss to others which excite no warmth. Would that we might always kindle to the true alone. There are habits that serve to render the mind noncombustible with reference to certain exciting causes and which prevent it from being entirely consumed by any impulse. Thus the habit of reasonableness and the practice of moderation may so affect the mental field that it will not take fire from any passing spark—a purpose served above all by a broad culture, the enemy of all fanaticism.

This practice of moderation commends itself all the more that the mind of man is so prone to extremes. The skeptics are over-skeptical, the optimists, fatuously optimistic. Idealists walk upon air; realists grovel in the mud. The

able and energetic incline to overwork and nervous breakdowns; the easy-going to shiftlessness and lack of purpose. The sounding brass of the sentimental optimist is no more pleasing to the ear than the melancholy wail of the pessimist. Life is good but it is also hard and I see nothing to celebrate. We did not come here to listen to Fourth of July orations but to live, and that is a serious business, to be undertaken with as much earnestness and as much humour as possible. Yet it is not reasonable to suppose that life was intended to be the category of crimes, diseases, and catastrophes man has made of it and I am in accord with those cheerful folk who declare this nightmare of the newspapers, the hospitals, and the criminal courts to be a spurious life, the product of human ignorance, not of divine wisdom, and life itself to be something infinitely better and sweeter,—only pray do not sentimentalise over it.

The true life is from within and to live from within is perhaps the most rational aim of mankind. At the same time there is an adaptation to be made to the external world, and the middle path is one where we are not so engrossed in spiritual things as to be out of all relation to the world nor, on the other

hand, so comfortably adapted to the external as to be blind to the inner light.] Pious people who are attempting to live as if they had already escaped from the body, and those fleshly minds, again, who perceive not the Spirit are equally far from the truth. The body is a garment and we might at least have as much respect for it as for our clothes which we are so anxious to have in fashion: but that man who has mistaken his coat and boots for himself is likely to be taken at his own value.

To what extent shall man identify himself with the body? It is of no use to pretend we have none, as do some, or to feed the conceit of virtue by sticking pins into the flesh, as have others. Nevertheless, the body is nothing in itself apart from the mind which animates it. We should feel, then, above all else, a loyalty to the cause of the Spirit for in that lies our hope, seeing how soon the body perisheth. Man is not of the dust but allied to that which is deathless and serene. To what end, then, should we meditate but to know that we are of the Spirit and to realise the significance of this momentous fact; to know that we are not drifting with the stream of Time but rest secure upon an eternal shore? We shall wage warfare not against matter but

against a foolish deference to the material: the conflict has all to do with the mind. A man's enemies are they of his own household—thoughts which retard his enlightenment and threaten his peace.

It is the Spirit which quickeneth, yet why quarrel with the body? Live on roots if you wish, provided you find yourself more genial and wise; otherwise what profits it? At the same time it appears that we do not live by this bread and meat but by a finer food—the bread of life which descendeth from above only upon the mind that can receive it. I am equally persuaded that the fruits of the Spirit are joy and peace and that it is otherwise with the carnal mind. Believe that to be spiritually minded is life, for no bible has said or can say more than this; believe also the spiritual mind has no part in the pomp and ceremony of this world, is more than morality, is concerned not with that which perisheth but with that which endureth.

This middle path is not confined to religion but winds comfortably through the fields of Thought and is equally good for the ordinary walks of life. You will see it bearing away, for instance, through the uncertain ground of Patriotism, which is often but another word

for bigotry. Uncharity is the besetting sin of zeal for any cause, the intolerance which sets nation against nation, creed against creed, man against man. To what end are we so exaggeratedly Saxon or Gallic that we can learn from no one else? Because I love my native land, therefore should I desire all the more to overcome those limitations which every nation imposes upon its citizens, every tribe upon its members. To be German is to be born with certain obvious defects, and to be American is to inherit others, and so on throughout the list. That one should aim to overcome these would doubtless be as much to the honour of his country as anything he could do. Whatever blinds me to a national defect does injury to me as an individual. That can be but a narrow mind that is not debtor to the Greek and to the Barbarian. Is it not a pity, for instance, that this lusty young America, so deficient in manners, should not learn from the elder races a little courtesy at least? We who are naturally irreligious might observe with advantage such religious folk as the Hindus; we who are extravagant and wasteful might study the economy of thrifty old Europe. And any man who is not learning from the ways of

other men—their failure and success—is a poor scholar, if not an ass.

A devotion, again, to Nature to the exclusion of other relations is certainly as undesirable an extreme as any, but it appears that beyond snatching a few moments for exercise for the benefit of his digestion, the average man cultivates Nature not at all. How much would we profit were we to regard contact with society as merely a stimulus to digestion? That artificiality which separates us more and more from the soil, removes us at the same time further and further from the companionship and the infinite resource of Nature. The solace of the woods and the society of the birds is his who can command it. How shall the philosopher regard those who neglect the natural world about them to interest themselves solely in the artificial world of man's making?—an affair of a little paint and powder and tinsel, of houses full of sick people, jealous of each other and complaining of their ills. Should not a philosopher counsel us to go into the woods and fields to recover, if may be, our equanimity and to cultivate a neglected friendship?

May he not with equal reason wonder that the average man should neglect books or music

or hobbies? His query is met with but one answer—We must get a living. He of all men should protest against this sophistry, or at least against so base a notion of living: for no argument, however plausible, will justify the folly of persistently dwarfing the intellectual and spiritual nature. In these times, that man who is not of a practical turn of mind will suffer tribulation; on the other hand, he lives a dull life in any age who is not possessed by the love of beauty. I would not sow my fields so continually to one crop—be it business or religion—as to exhaust the soil, but rather give it a rotation of crops, even let it lie fallow now and again, or devote it for a time to that which, like travel, has the virtue of renewing the intellectual soil.

Life is incomplete without music and poetry. Again, nothing is truer than that the mind needs the balance wheel afforded by practical work. Here our doctrine of the middle path will serve admirably. That thing, or relation, good in itself, may be said to become evil when pursued to the exclusion of other things and relations: the extremist always robs Peter to pay Paul. You will readily see this in regard to money: an excellent thing considered as one factor in the problem; a pernicious one

when assumed to be the problem itself. It is as true of religion: the zealot is such at the expense of some of life's relations and of breadth of vision. Alas, it is too often at the cost of friendship, for let a man be possessed by a fad and he begins to walk apart from his friends. They too must attend seances or eat grass if they are to follow him; they too must become as he is and see his folly transformed by some strange glamour into a shining virtue, with eyes only for the lion's skin, oblivious of the ass that wears it. Thus no man knoweth in what hour his friend shall be taken from him.

I would not be too much of a stoic for it is at the expense of the humanities; neither an epicure for it weakens the fibre. Deliver me from a cynic's lot; deliver me also from taking myself too seriously. Poverty is a garment which mocks the dignity of its wearer; neither are great riches to be desired, which are a burden to their possessor and the source of envy and cupidity in others. Let us not work so hard that we lose all interest in play; nor so love play as to affect the capacity for work. As for our way of living—may we abide in temperance, and the gods protect us from self-righteousness.

Therefore, it is not intended by a philosophy of moderation to discredit enthusiasm—the

love of Truth, the love of the work—but only that misguided zeal which pursues its object at the sacrifice of all other aims and which inevitably comes to see a thing isolated and out of focus rather than in its relation to other things, which is to have a true perception of it: nor by individualism to disparage the State—God forbid—but to stoutly maintain that the individual must not be sacrificed to become merely an infinitesimal fraction in place of a man. Organisation, its friends say, will conquer the world. Very good, but it will be at the expense of the individual. When this momentous feat is accomplished there will not be left a man on the earth. We shall have only organisations of men—treasurers, secretaries, and clerks. Life will have resolved itself into a committee meeting; our opinions, our breathing, will be regulated by a union. It will conquer the world, no doubt,—but what is that? When you awake from your little earthly sleep, you will not recall which world it was wherein you played such pranks. For you the world will have vanished like a fretful dream; but that which you will not escape will be yourself, and alone in the silence, life will demand of you as of old, the measure of your self-trust.

CHAPTER XIII

WALKING

IF one would have the news, not of the slums of the city, but of the courts of heaven, at no time is he more likely to hear something worth while than in the solitary walk, but when asked if I have seen anything extraordinary I must confess for the hundredth time to having encountered nothing more remarkable than the birds and trees. I never expect to see anything more marvellous than these familiar objects, so wonderful indeed that most men overlook them altogether. The artificial taste craves something sensational, but thank God the woods are not a circus.

There are no miracles, or everything in Nature is a miracle—whichever way you choose to regard it. Nothing in history or fable is more wonderful than the growth of the oak from an acorn, the circulation of the sap, the flight of a swallow, or the song of a wren.

Morning and night have in them an element which might be ascribed to the supernatural inasmuch as they are never wholly explained by the simple facts. There is that mysterious penumbra of all external things, the projection of the mind which beholds them. I cannot tell to what extent the morning is a phenomenon of the heavens and how much an inexplicable phenomenon of my own mind.

Early in February the red maples blossom in the swamp, a faint glow in the grey expanse, increasing to a splendid crimson. Then comes the plum, a marvel of beauty in all the Carolina woods. He who cannot see the miraculous in wintry twigs suddenly enveloping themselves in an exquisite nebulous cloud, to be transfigured by the roadside, is a skeptic beyond redemption. Marvellous, too, the appearance of the bees with the plum blossoms replacing the silence to which we have become accustomed with the musical hum of little wings. In the centre of a vast dull field surrounded by its sombre wall of pines, the blossoming peach is a vision indeed and should the heavens open and a dove—or an angel—appear I would be no more impressed, if as much.

When the red bud gives delicate splashes

of colour to the woods and the jasmine hangs in profusion along solitary wood roads, Earth invites the Muses to return and no place were more fit, while the crab opens its pink blossoms and perfumes the air and the dogwood is like rifts of sunshine amid the dark shadows of the pines. A spectacle of such transcendent beauty affects the mind with something akin to awe. Daily I attend rites and mysteries more ancient by a thousand centuries than the human race and in comparison with whose sylvan splendour the ceremonies and pageantry of mankind are paltry and insignificant.

What goest thou forth to see, indeed? Why, friend, to see the ground open and a flock of bloodroot come trooping forth to stand amidst the dry oak leaves; to see the host of bird's-foot violets on the sand, as fair a company as one would wish to meet; to behold the phlox and the verbena and to receive a message that the dwarf iris brings from the heart of things. I wish to know if I am still able to profit by the sight of this little leafless blossom barely rising from the ground in perfect beauty. Early in March the gnat-catcher appears and is followed by the yellow-throated warbler, the parula, and the water-thrush. I recall the date of their arrival

though I may forget the days of the month, which are of little consequence unless one has business to transact. For that matter, my business with the warblers is as important as any and will amount to as much in the end. To find the budding trees full of parulas buzzing their little song, or to hear the sudden wild cry of the water-thrush, is an event of real interest and makes the day memorable. There are some who do not attend to this, which is another way of saying that they neglect their opportunities.

It was long ago pointed out by a master of the art that walkers, like poets, are born, not made. The propulsion of the feet is so small a part of it. What a long step from walking to the art of walking, from reading to the art of reading, from thinking to the art of thinking! You have not walked to any purpose if you have not brought yourself to a new frame of mind. Walking is the recreation of a philosopher and, one might add, of an explorer, as well. With all this pother about the poles of the earth, he is but an indifferent walker who cannot discover something of more interest in a morning's stroll. When I have really walked, when there has been "a spirit in my feet," I have penetrated a little further the

undiscovered country that lies ever before us, never again to return to the point from which I set out. To walk means to discover something ahead, to leave something behind.

There is no better reason for a walk at any time than the love of companionship, of that society of birds and trees and flowers which goes by the name of solitude. The walker knows very well that solitude is a social state, and he will have discovered that, like an exclusive society, it demands much of him. To be acceptable to birds you must be content to obliterate yourself, and precisely the same attitude of mind which permits one to enjoy alien races, observing them as might an invisible spectator, has likewise enabled me to understand birds, while it has encouraged them to tolerate me. Flowers are scarcely less companionable and there is solace also in the company of trees. That wonderful empyrean chant of the pines, that unworldly music with its suggestion of the sublime, is a symphony, more lyrical, less sad than the music of the sea.

Yet when the heart feels the need of God, it is within that we turn and not without. The hills, it is true, uplift, the flowers sweeten the thoughts, but we come to rest, not in the

phenomenal, but in the real of which the external beauty is the perishable symbol. Silence is more beautiful than sound and the unseen yields that not in the power of the visible world to give. All too rare are these divine moments and if they presage that which is to come, we may indeed look forward with confidence.

“In that which is night to all creatures waketh the self-subjugated; and that in which the creatures wake is night to the sage who seeth.”

Some other and spiritual sense yields us a vague perception of that which is not seen. If our assurance is as yet feeble, it is because we have not cultivated this means of contact with that imperishable reality which the five senses—the foolish five—are incapable of recognising. However beautiful may be the phenomenal world, our refuge must be more and more in Spirit. How can it be otherwise where all things fade from view and are formed only to be resolved into their elements again? I am encompassed by illusion, shall I not build my house on a rock? The material world means most when through its beauty we receive intimations of a spiritual world; and indeed the sky, the snow peaks, and some

delicate blossoms of the early year, if not spring itself, scarce seem material, so tenuous is the veil through which the Spirit reveals itself.

The state of the walker is one somewhat rapt and aloof from the thoughts of the town and of everyday affairs, and the philosophy of walking concerns itself above all with "That inward eye which is the bliss of solitude." In twenty years I have walked as far as the East is from the West and this has been but a little preparation that I might now begin the journey in earnest. The distance is not to be reckoned in miles but in experience. It may happen that the longest walks have yielded least and on more than one occasion I have no more than climbed a ridge or entered the woods to find myself in a new country. There is, we are told, a fourth dimension, and at times one comes very near to perceiving the world as lying in a different plane. If it be true that there are four dimensions, then to see the world so would not be an act of super-consciousness but of mere normal vision, for it follows that we now have only a three-quarter view of it.

Tramps, it may be assumed, do not walk in the mood to which I have referred, yet the

state of the tramp is not wholly unphilosophic. Respectability is a fetish with us. We care very little how we may appear before God but we will break our necks to appear respectable and well-to-do in the sight of man. Most men are shams but the tramp is genuine. Having nothing to lose, he has no fear for his property or his pride. Yet like many other men, better or worse, he misses the cream of life for lack of humour and a cultivated mind. It is a curious fact that while in our own state of society mendicancy is the opposite of respectability, in an older society, on another continent, the religious mendicant at least is by all traditions its most highly respected member. The houseless wanderer of India, calling nothing his own, has put behind him much that might interrupt the true enjoyment of a walk and is to that extent surely a walker, but his appearance does not indicate that he follows the middle path, the only one for a long journey.

If, having the requisite quality of mind, you would indulge yourself in an epicurean taste of life, I commend to you the knapsack and the open road. You must set out for parts unknown as if you were never to return, indeed *you* never will return but another in your place.

The road leads to Rome, to Olympus, to the Elysian fields. I have followed that road, my possessions a pipe and a knapsack, and have come to Rome in due time and to regions not on the map. All the wonders of the world I saw and have never been able to find them since. No train takes you there; no stage stops at those points. On that road I never grew tired; the people were all interesting; all was a picture for my delectation. Every morning the world was before me—castles and hamlets, rivers and mountains with magic names. Now I see it was my mood, my age, my state of mind. It was I who was enchanted and I found in Rome what I took to Rome.

How do we react upon the external: are we capable of profitable reactions, or do we receive only dull and commonplace impressions? Whether or not walking is worth while will depend somewhat on this—and the same may be said of living. The walker is not an athlete but an observer, capable of looking within over that wonderful and unexplored region, but also capable in an unusual degree of looking at the world about him—an observer of both Man and Nature. Powers of observation and reflection are the chief

qualifications and, though walking may not be accomplished without legs, it is as difficult for an athlete to become a walker as for a rich man to find peace of mind.

When he has set out upon his road in the freshness of the morning, the ploughman in the fields, the gypsy, the peddler, the children going to school or playing truant, undergo for the benefit of the walker a metamorphosis which relieves them of the commonplaceness native to them and causes them to appear in a new and romantic light. Yet the change is not in them but in him. They are always interesting if we were but able to see it. Whitman seems ever to have possessed this point of view in regard to people; Thoreau in regard to Nature. Walking focuses the glass so that the farmer's barn, the village tavern, and the church steeple dawn on the vision with a certain novelty of aspect. The sad truth is that the familiar tends to lose interest for us, so that the most wonderful places—Benares, Bagdad, and Guanajuato—are as commonplace to their inhabitants as is our native town to us; and one of the important things in life is to discover and keep on hand a remedy for the scales that are for ever forming on mortal eyes.

No walker can read the *Song of the Open Road* without an inner response; or Thoreau's Journal and not feel he has read the mind of a true saunterer—one who strolled at times to the Holy Land, the destination of all walkers. But none have left more than a hint of the direction they took, and we can only draw inferences as to what course they pursued. One readily discovers that Thoreau had no rule but to follow his own genius and that the obstacles he encountered were in himself. He was but a learner yet his thoughts will give heart to all who essay to be walkers hereafter forevermore.

The days are now marked by the appearance of the birds and my walks have all the charm of clandestine meetings, are flavoured with snatches of song and redolent with the aroma of the long-leaf pine and the perfume of the sweet-scented shrub and the holly. One day the sputtering call of the white-eye greets the ear, then it is the song of the hooded warbler, with fugitive glimpses of that beautiful bird—like the sight of gold to a miser. Now vireos appear with didactic voices to preach from the tree-tops: the red-eye in soprano, the yellowthroat in contralto tones. Later comes the palmwarbler with wagging

tail and swifts twitter on the wing. By the middle of April I hear the sweet voice of the orchard oriole from the edge of the cotton fields, the robin-like song of the summer tanager among the oaks, and detect the oven-bird shyly walking through the woodwardia by the brook. Vines wreath themselves about the tree-tops and the saunterer rejoices in the classic beauty of bignonia, wistaria, and scarlet honeysuckle.

When, this morning, I happened for the first time on the atamasco lily, one of the most exquisite wild flowers of America, and again on a patch of the beautiful amsonia, who can say but I enjoyed one of the rarest pleasures known to man. It was long ago discovered that there is only so much enjoyment to be had. The growing mind *outgrows* its pleasures and must solace itself with the quality rather than the quantity of its emotional experience. It is not of so much importance how *long* we live but rather *how* we live. Are we alive at all or do we merely assume that we are from force of habit? Many times in the saddle I have been convinced that I *was* in fact alive; and so on many a morning, in these and other woods of this continental garden, listening to the lisping notes of warblers or the jubilant

voices of wrens, feeling in myself a subtle correspondence to this outward beauty and mystery, I have known that the breath of life was indeed the inheritance of the saunterer.

CHAPTER XIV

RIDING

A HORSE, like the desert, inevitably brings out the nomad: he who needs ample space under the sky and is compelled by the wanderlust which is his inheritance. That man has never been tamed, his home is the saddle, his world the trail.

Therefore I have no part with those who ride merely for exercise. This may be a sufficient aim for a man's liver but not for the man, unless indeed the liver be the man. No, it is this free and indomitable one who rides, he of all the host of selves who emerges from the crowd and swings into the saddle leaving behind the stay-at-homes, the ease-loving, the bookish selves. They are of few days and full of trouble but he is of the immortals. A poor bit of earth is this body, a fragile jar of clay, soon broken. All our pleasures end in pain, our passions in senility—a fool's lot, if that were all. Shall I not free myself from

this curse of the fool; shall I not stop being ridden and ride at last?

The mule, you will grant, has abundant opportunity to develop his muscles, yet how much does it profit him? A man, then, who takes his exertion like a mule can hardly derive any more benefit. A friend of field sports may still refuse to place athletics before scholarship. What profits it to grow strong like the mule? Muscles are so cheap and machines are invented from time to time that serve better than this weak flesh and do not tire themselves. There is, however, a reaction of the mind that comes with exercise in the open, whereby the mind appears to assume a more genial view of itself and to experience a sense of well-being. To induce this consciousness is worth while but he who can do no more is not yet a horseman.

One cannot carry much baggage in the saddle. A man whose mind is loaded with committee reports and such dead weight may think himself a horseman while in fact he is no more than a pack-horse. A straight and narrow way, on the trail there is no room for superfluities. We are made to divest ourselves of much that is useless, and if any man will ride long enough he shall leave his pride and

self-love behind him while those artificial props of his mind—his money, his position, his egotism, and his luxuries—drop by the wayside one by one and leave him at last a less encumbered mind. From the arm-chair to the saddle is as far as from this world to the next.

On the trail, if you find the sun hot, it is hot; if you ache, why then you ache, and the less said of it the better. If you wish to be condoled with you are on the wrong road. As for the cooking, appetite is the only sauce we can carry. Let none announce his colds and his complaints. If he would ride let him reveal his health and sanity. Is not the village a species of clinic where the inhabitants meet to discuss their ills? Have they not telephones in their houses that they may lose no time in declaring their symptoms? The trail is for space and silence: let them sit at home who would complain of the universe or weep over themselves. Nature has no patience with weakness, but the winds whistle a Spartan music and the clouds form themselves into winged victories for the resolute mind.

A horse is strangely good company—a shy, timid animal with some sense withal and a seeming sympathy with one's mountain

moods. If we allow ourselves to be possessed by the spirit of the wild he intrudes no alien thought. My own power and agility, not great in themselves, are reinforced by those of the horse. The wild spirit and aboriginal vigour of the animal become mine and it is as if I, like some centaur, reared and curveted, all strength, and freedom, and defiance. If you have not felt yourself part of the horse, sitting easily in the saddle and strong with the horse's strength, you have never ridden, and, believe me, it is good to be a centaur.

If you would know the truth concerning the fabled Pegasus, it is that you have only to bestride your pony in the dawn and set out upon the trail by the light of the morning star to find yourself upon his back, if it so happen that you are a horseman of the sky and not of the ground. Many are called but few are chosen. How is it people can regard life as a matter-of-fact affair when in reality it is all mystery and enchantment and we behold it through the medium of thought and feeling as by an ever changeful light? It may be I did bestride that classic beast that the light upon the snow peaks, upon Shasta and Pike's Peak, upon Colima and Popocatepetl, has seemed so fair and the earth a miracle,—

beautiful symbol of a freedom and purity which in the Soul abides forever. The phantom ranges on the opal desert, where the phainopepla nests in the mesquites and the canyon wren is singing from the lava cliffs, beckon me across the continent. They call, and will call, while the world lasts.

Life is good in the saddle on those Western trails. They lead up and away forever. No one has ever come to the end. You will see the blacktail and the antelope, the wolf and the coyote, and you may know that they have something which you have lost, and that you are on the trail of that which they will never find. You will hear Scott's oriole singing from the agave on the mesas where the mariposa and the castilleia bloom, where the red flycatchers gleam like rubies, and the song of Western meadow-larks fills the air with faint-sweet music. Often has that music voiced my thoughts as if I were singing. Though I were no more than a shepherd or a cowboy on those ethereal ranges, they would be mine while I had eyes and ears and would feed me with beauty as they fed the horse with grass. Thus does the animal thrive on so humble a repast while his rider must have the food of the gods. You think it so poor a lot to be a

cowboy? Not if you are a horseman as well. It is something to have red blood in your veins; it is something to have room for yourself; to have a horse and be able to ride him. Ah, but it takes long to learn to ride. You will see many people in the parks earnestly striving. We prepare during one lifetime that we may be born riders in the next.

What then does the mountain trail yield the rider? It affords first those things which nourish the nomad—solitude, the savage beauty of the arid mountains, the ample perspective, fenceless and unredeemed. When the nomad has his share there is finer food for the immortal rider. To him the mountains speak directly in his own tongue, the lofty speech of the hills and the sky. They remind him that he is something larger, better, than this poor body would indicate; that strength and freedom are his portion forever. It may appear from this that my philosophy of the horse is altogether a mystical one, a sort of sky riding, in fact. Not so. I do not live exclusively on air though it is a part of my diet. Neither can I live by bread and meat alone—nor on that diet of lollypops so pleasing to some. The simple reaction of a healthy mind upon Nature viewed from the saddle

is one of the truest pleasures in life. Give me morning and a horse and I have all wealth; I sport with the earth, I leap upon the mountains. The cold clouds of mortality roll back before the immortal horseman. Swing into the saddle and take the old trail, for it leads away from weakness and despair. What shall it profit a man indeed to gain the whole world; and why should he sell himself into slavery for a string of beads, who might have known the freedom of the trail? All is vanity saith the preacher, and he says it in vain. But the hills and the sky preach better, for they convince where man has failed.

To pull steadily up to the backbone of the range as by your own strength and without fatigue; to look out over the earth in the serene light and to see that it is a good place in which to spend a day; to descend the long red trail through the chaparral to the riverbed and to hear the music of the stream, while you take off saddle and bridle, and tether your horse under the cottonwoods—I would have come to Earth for this alone. It is one of the best things life has to offer here to any man, to have loved the mountains and the desert and to have known the great personality of each; to have dwelt for a time in the primeval

forest and to have experienced the freedom and the health of the rider. Let riches take to themselves wings and moth corrupt, the spirit of the rider goes on, crossing range after range far beyond the opal deserts—beyond the deserts of this life mayhap—on some phantom Pegasus, ever indomitable, ever free.

CHAPTER XV

HUNTING AND FISHING

IF walking and riding, as elements in an outdoor philosophy, are subjective rather than objective, they are by no means wholly so, since sport and exercise are factors in themselves which the philosopher cannot afford to forego. They help sustain the sinew and muscle of the mind; they impart vigour and are good for the disposition. The ten-mile gallop and the cold shower may be recommended to the scholar with as much assurance as the quiet stroll by the brook and the meditation on a log, listening to the redeye and the wood-thrush.

The subject of sport is one upon which both the naturalist and the philosopher may be assumed to have something to say. Thoreau has somewhere observed with truth that hunting is a phase in the evolution of man which is normal to youth and that the boy is naturally a hunter. Granting that it is well

for man to have known this hunter stage, we may also concede that he should in time naturally outgrow it, and his attitude may be regarded as merely a matter of growth; so much so, indeed, that it serves as an indication of the quality of his perception. Yet there is such maudlin sentimentality on the subject of shooting, that one to whom it has ceased to appeal must explain himself, or run the risk of being classed with these milk-and-water sentimentalists.

What man would not prefer to be ranked with the sportsman, even though he has come to enjoy his sport with glass, notebook, and camera rather than with rifle and fowling piece? True sportsmanship stands for certain excellent and manly qualities; moreover, your sportsman, though he be the enemy of the individual bird or deer, is the friend of the race and committed to its preservation, and herein as in other respects he differs from the ignoble pothunter. The interests of sportsmen have brought about a much more intimate study of the needs of wild animals and has resulted in the protective game laws which make their continuance upon the earth possible. It was not the sportsman but the butcher who well-nigh exterminated the bison,

and it is due to the sportsman that a remnant of that race is preserved.

But my sporting friends, I observe, have given little attention to the psychology of our relation to wild animals, which is to me so much more significant than the calibre of rifles and the force of projectiles. The meeting with wild animals possesses a sylvan charm which the hunter's attitude of mind in the act of killing cannot fail to dispel for him. Therefore he takes only the skim milk and leaves the cream. One must surely be free from sinister intentions if he is to enjoy fully the sight of a deer. If bent on a dinner, he will obtain a dinner and no more. If he covets the head, he will lose the deer. The sympathetic eye reveals that which can never be seen through the sights of a rifle. It is a matter of *attention* as well: hence I attend to that which yields me the largest returns.

Your museum naturalist, again, has his mind keyed to *specimens*. In place of a bird or deer, he sees a specimen; while I watch its expression he is already stuffing the carcass. His ulterior motive interferes with his present enjoyment: and here is the key to the whole matter, for Nature only yields herself wholly to the mind free from such motives. You

must have nothing to gain if you would gain all.

A gun interferes somewhat with the enjoyment of birds and this is perhaps my chief objection. It introduces a discordant element and interrupts the peace of the morning. Again, I have such satisfaction in my present pursuits, that while I might indulge in many others—shooting, for instance,—there is no time. Furthermore, I have no pleasure in killing. Hence I still enjoy stalking the game but am content with the sight of it, while the possession of the carcass is superfluous unless necessary for food. I speak of hunting, however, merely in the light of a pastime. There will be discovered, let us hope, no evidence of sentimentality in the reasons given. If we are committed to an evolution which tends away from the primitive hunter to the pastoral and contemplative life, it is by reason of a Will higher than our own which works in all men in its own way and in its own time.

It is justly averred that shooting is a vigorous and manly sport—so is war. But in the control of a spirited horse one experiences reactions that answer as well, without putting himself into that vengeful attitude to animal life. Rather does he place himself in a super-

ior relation in maintaining that dominion which belongs to man, not by the rifle so much as by patience and skill. One may commend the example even, though he has not essayed to follow it, of a certain plainsman, imbued with a love for the beasts, who satisfies his daring and hardihood by lassoing the panther and the grizzly and capturing them with his own hands. This is to be regarded as a transformation of the hunter in which he loses none of his prowess while putting it to a superior and more intelligent use than the mere killing of game.

The quail season is well enough but what has it to offer compared with the delights of the warbler season? Surely the hunter takes only the coarser pleasures leaving the finer for the naturalist and the poet. Consider the complex emotions induced in the mind of the field naturalist by the migration of his warbler friends. In this does he lay up treasure where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, but whether it be called earth or heaven matters little. Association of a charming and exquisite character is one of the chief treasures of life. The warblers arouse memories of other warblers and other days. How long, indeed, has been my association with the black-

throated blue, the parula, the pine warbler, the oven-bird and the water-thrush! What solitudes, what sylvan scenes they bring to mind in many years, in many States! The swamps and woods where they are at home are my *country* in a sense as vital as any. I am native to this American soil no less than to American traditions. In very truth, that which we call Nature, the hills and the sky, the birds and flowers, are part of myself, more remote than hands and feet, but intimately associated with my well-being; and it must be that those with whom this is not true are, so to speak, paralysed in their extremities and thus not in full possession of themselves.

You will observe that hunting is commonly associated only with killing, whereas to hunt is properly to *seek*, as well, and looking for that, the whereabouts of which is unknown, or merely seeking what one may find—whether it be game in the accepted sense, or the birds, plants, butterflies, or minerals of any locality—is really the chief element of interest in hunting. All is game to me and to this extent I shall ever remain a hunter. My aim is discovery, not possession. To have found the deer and to observe the splendid poise, the inimitable grace of the wild creature is enough:

the carcass would but mar these wholly pleasant impressions by introducing a taint of the butcher. In a region new to me I am possessed with this spirit of the hunter, of the discoverer, to see what plants are growing, what birds are flying there: it is an insatiable curiosity.

It is true that the pursuits of the hunter yield much game that never falls to the gun, which a hostile attitude may prevent him from recognising. How stupid and unprofitable to regard animals merely as targets! One may find it fair sport to follow the dogs solely for the picture they afford; indeed, a glimpse of dogs pointing in the orange-coloured sedge amidst the young long-leaved pines, under a cloudless sky, is one of the best results of any sport. Allowing the gunner his full share in quail-shooting and duck-shooting, the prize falls to the artist; though in the matter of water fowl it is perhaps true that you must really go shooting to know them, and he who refrains from the gun will be long in becoming familiar with those shy birds. How can the hunter resist the charm of the marshes; how can he fail to become artist and poet as well? unless, indeed, he has the mind of a clam—which explains much. To push your boat among the grasses, to see the skulking rail

and the teetering sandpiper, to hear the splash of ducks and to watch for diving grebes and sheldrakes is rare sport. For the marsh is an enchantment, and to glide silently through the marsh grass on the oily tide, a sort of pleasant day-dream. If we have within us the seed of contentment, how little suffices. A duck boat and a paddle and an October day to drift on the misty waters, and why should not a man take joy in his lot and greet the world with a smile?

I cannot explain why the primitive savagery of the hunter has left me but not that of the fisherman, unless it be that the latter is not savagery at all but a superior instinct really alien to the aboriginal man. Savages catch fish, to be sure, but can they be said to *fish*? Does any one arrive at the distinction of being a fisherman who is not qualified by temperament and by certain intellectual and moral refinements? Many go a-fishing but few are fishermen. Angling is the proper sport of a philosopher, lending itself to the placid bent of a subjective mind, while hunting is, by its very nature, suited to the objective man who loves action and foregoes reflection. The streams I have fished have flowed through the current of my thoughts, and for all the

trout I have taken, yet have I been after larger game and have perhaps taken some of that also.

Between the fisherman and the trout there is an affinity which is not of the earth earthy. Far above the rude instinct to kill is a finer and subtler feeling, a passion for conquest by skill in which the mind and the heart, the eye and the hand participate. The trout on the line is not a mere physical pull, but an influence, communicating itself through the rod, not more to the arm than to some associative mechanism of the mind. While I am after the fish, the chief prize is the unique pleasure of fishing. Once the agile trout takes the fly, contact with him through the slender rod and delicate line and leader is even more subtle than through the reins, with the tender mouth of a nervous horse. There is a *touch* for the rod and a touch for the reins, as there is a touch for the piano. All the manoeuvres of the fish are communicated by delicate tactile impressions. While one does not inflict much pain upon a fish, yet he must confess to true savagery in that he can still angle at the expense of the trout. But if the fisherman has little compunction, at least he does not gauge his sport by the number of fish taken but

rather by the character of his experience in taking them.

One might elect to dwell for ever in that companionship which a trout stream affords. The murmurous song and the solitude of the forest are included in the true idea of fishing, not less than casting the fly and taking the trout. The fisherman angles for more than fish and brings home in his creel only the least part of his spoils. Wading down the rapids, leaping from rock to rock, he himself becomes a creature of the stream. Its song is his song; its moods his moods. The odour of the forest is the breath of his nostrils. He loses himself in the spray, in the roar of the waterfall, emerging by the placid reaches to cast a fly on silent pools. He seeks the trout as Orpheus sought his Eurydice. He is in love with the gleam of silver and copper, with the flash of jewelled drops, of rainbow hues, in the depth of the woods. Ledge and boulder and sombre pines are his world—a world for demigods, for fishermen.

Give me a trout stream and a snow-capped mountain for my paradise. Let it be rude and savage that I may see the hand of God. Let me hear the virile music of falling waters while I angle for larger and larger fish, for

we cannot always be content with taking only brook trout; we must have the noblest sport; we must seek at last the great prize. That fish is not to be caught in the stream of Time, and it may happen to the fisherman, when this is his quest, he shall find that he has already begun to angle in the still waters of Eternity.

CHAPTER XVI

PADDLING

WINTER in the North is not merely a lowering of the temperature but an absence of birds and flowers. My friends have then retired, some to the South, others underground. That makes it winter, as their return in itself constitutes spring. Now, in April, the yellow-throated and pine warblers are nesting in South Carolina as the rest flit through the trees on their way to Canada and the hilltops of New York and New England, sighting these elevations like islands in their sea, where some, being islanders, will alight while others continue to the mainland. Impelled, perhaps, by a migratory instinct derived, like their own, from some glacial age, I return to my summer camp as the birds to theirs. I anticipate once more the moccasin-flower in the glens and swamps as a meeting with a veritable and charming personality. The very lake lying among the hills is a

lovely embodiment of one knows not what, with power to induce in us thoughts and feelings peculiar to itself, an undefined presence with which to hold silent and agreeable communion.

Every region has a distinct personality, often more decided in feature, more individual in character, than are the nondescript faces of the majority of men. The topography may be flat and simpering or virile and stern, aquiline, high cheek-boned, and aggressive. This is a new face at which I look in Western New York, like all glacial country, and yet the rocks themselves are very old as one may see by the brachiopods and trilobites. It is a lake country by virtue of the great glacier which carved the lake basins—the mere tool of the gods, no doubt; a pastoral country by reason of man—also a tool of the gods. If they have allowed him to denude the woods, they have at the same time made it worth while to plant the purple grape and sow the golden wheat that the vineyards and the wheat fields should redeem the lonely hills and invite the bobolink and the upland plover to nest.

The grouse nests by the camp, or perhaps it should be said that I camp by her nest. In the

same grove of hemlocks, on the hillside and in the glen, the Canadian warbler and the water-thrush, oven-bird, black-and-white creeper, black-throated green warbler, redstart, yellow-throated vireo, chickadee, and peewee are nesting. There is little to disturb the tenor of their way or of mine and the only intruder has been the cowbird. Here I have leisure to observe the moods of a lake and to discover how companionable it may be—the lovely thing lying there in the dawn, in the sunset, in the moonlight, while the hills seem now near, again remote and phantom-like. The ever changing lake suggests the vicissitudes of life. Bright mornings settle into gloom, while out of a cold grey dawn with the hills wrapped in clouds comes a day when the sunbeams dance upon sapphire waves under a turquoise sky. 'T is now bright, now terrible, this mortal dream, and all its brightness and all its gloom are no more than sunshine and shadow on the waters.

How magnetic are names and what pure hypnotism is a large part of the magic associated with them. Italy, France, and the Rhine—I have them all before me on the lake, but here I am not hypnotised. Is there not, perhaps, some natural magic that will do for

one here what romance and fable do there? Around the lake are the vineyards if not the castles; here is the spell of the classic grape. I need but the romance in myself. Travel is one of the illusions and if I have a *mind* to I can journey to the wonders of the world in my boat, and by climbing to the top of Whaleback can perhaps see what no one has seen before. What was Olympus, what was Parnassus, but the effect of some Whaleback on imaginative minds?

The distant Naples Valley appears as ethereal as a dream landscape, yet what shrewd bargains the farmers are driving there to-day, how they are counting their pennies, how matter-of-fact, commonplace, and unethereal it looks to them, and I wonder if perchance there is one among its inhabitants who is now thinking, not of the price of hogs or the cost of living, but of the heart of things. I like to believe that there is one, perhaps, in that community and one in the next, sitting silent like myself upon some Olympus of his own, reflecting for this hour at least upon that which is eternal, and beholding with an inner eye the light which shines neither on land nor sea. Somewhere they sit, each upon his sacred hill, perhaps in other worlds, in other

ages, too, and a bond unites us: a brotherhood of the Spirit who need not meet to know each other, for we are nearer than those whom merely time and place and common aims have drawn together.

Each morning invites to a new earth, fresh and fair as in the beginning. The light on the beach seems to carry no taint of yesterday—of that long yesterday; to have fallen never on the weary old world before, but to shine now for the first time, in its pristine purity renewing all it touches. Let a man always expect that on some morning of his life the familiar beach will prove the shore of a new continent. Towards sundown orb-weaving spiders which have festooned their webs about the camp, appear from their nests and busily repair their snares or weave new ones, continuing at work until it is too dark for human eyes to see what they are about. Their round bodies and slender legs are outlined against the sunset sky as they move up and down or round and round the spirals of the web. Presently they are lost to view in the darkness and ghostly hawk-moths appear, to dart rapidly hither and thither on vibrating wings—phantoms of the insect world. Fireflies carry their lights to and fro in the Cimmerian dark-

ness of the hemlocks. Here is *another* world, if not the next, which we are permitted to view as its inhabitants silently pursue their life in the stillness of the night. And that world, apparently so mysterious, is in no sense strange to these creatures who are prosaically attending to their own affairs. Mystery exists only in the mind that entertains it and revelation is merely the perception of some fact. The lamp of the firefly has not yet revealed to it the presence of man. It is assumed by the Buddhists that there is a stage of development wherein the individual becomes conscious of former births. Well, there is nothing strange in this. One can see from Whale-back—or from Olympus—what is not visible here. Perhaps I am now observing some former states of my life as I watch these creatures of the night. When we are keyed to a low plane we do not perceive the higher levels, and as we ascend, the memory of lower planes fades from the mind. We attract that which belongs to our thought-level, and this I have proved to my cost. How inexorable is the law; how grim the school in which we study to acquire wisdom!

If any one thinks his life has become simple and unencumbered, let him camp for a few

days or set off for a journey into the woods and observe how many things he must carry on his back and have on his mind. Or let him go for a day with nothing but his two hands and see how he fares. To such a state has he arrived that he would give his kingdom for a match, a pinch of salt, or a little coffee. Yet observe how the Indian travels, how the Bedouin traverses the desert with only a handful of dates between himself and starvation. Here I am accustomed to go about with no money in my pocket. Since money will not buy any of the things I seek in the woods it is useless for the time being. But let one enter a strange city without five cents in his possession to pay his carfare and what a nonentity he instantly becomes. He is no longer a man but a phantom whom no one can see but the police. Even so we cannot pay all of our bills with money, if we would, and some accounts are only settled with tears and repentance. Thank Heaven the birds do not inquire what I have in my pocket.

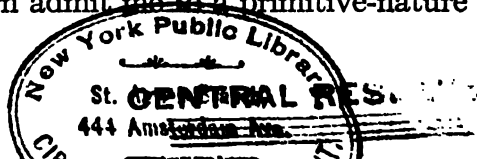
Simplicity has become a hackneyed phrase, while few practise it. After all, there is no virtue in living like a savage, and the point is merely that we should live as true to our plane as the Indian to his; that we should not

encumber ourselves with things and conditions useless and burdensome to the cultivated and spiritual mind. Having arrived at this state, man requires protection from vulgarity as the savage from civilisation. He would have his dinner well served and eat it in peace though it be of herbs. He develops taste, and this by a process of evolution which regards first quantity and size, and lastly quality and fitness, eliminating one by one the works of the devil and most of the works of man. The essence of simplicity is thus a contentment with the handiwork of God, which is itself the basis of good taste in us.

Rowing up the Inlet in midsummer I have on either side a garden of cat-tails and water-lilies, or a tropical jungle, if I so choose to regard it, with water snakes in place of anacondas, bitterns and green herons instead of scarlet ibises. Pickerel weed, button bushes, and swamp milkweed grow with tropical luxuriance along the banks of the wandering stream, while the pond lily is the *Victoria Regia* of these waters. The great blue heron flaps lazily ahead of the boat and the aboriginal voice of the bull-frog resounds in the silence. Rowing, like riding, is more than mere exercise, or rather it exercises not mus-

cles only, but faculties. He who can paddle fast enough to get away from himself, or far enough to arrive at a new point of view, is master of his craft. Others are merely human motors—machinery for propelling a boat. A canoe, like a saddle, has the advantage of holding but little. Some states of mind are likely to unbalance it; others to sink it to the bottom. A man is encouraged to divest himself of the encumbrances of the mind—as he lays off his coat—when he goes a-rowing or paddles a canoe, and if he does not, he will find he has a heavy load to carry and will not paddle far from where he started, though he should keep at it all his days.

I walk and ride and paddle toward one goal. These are but ways of exercising the faculties by means of which I hope to arrive. The fisherman, trolling all day with scarcely a nibble to reward him, is perhaps acquiring patience, which is worth more to him than any fish in the lake; while as I drift among the cat-tails I am cultivating my friends, and thus not wasting my time. From Whaleback comes the voice of the hermit thrush and that which he has to say is of peculiar interest. The rattle of the kingfisher and the booming of the bittern admit me to a primitive-nature



with a feeling of exultation. Chickadees calling from the pines inspire for the moment a sympathy with the common day, while the rhythmic song of the ivory cricket affects me by its ceaseless throb as if it were the pulse of the earth and my own beat in unison with it. Though I were to float on this lake forever I would not come to the end, but every year would behold it with new eyes. If one can see it with the sane eye of a chickadee he will be content; and if, at last, with the calm vision of the sage—what then? There is a transmuting power in the mind which can change to gold the base metal of the foolish and the vulgar, and this is the veritable philosopher's stone.

CHAPTER XVII

THE QUIET LIFE

[T will be seen that the burden of my philosophy, if philosophy it be, is self-trust and the worth of the individual: a plea at the same time for the life of privacy in which to cultivate a more intimate relation to God and to Nature. He who desires to learn how to *live* for a day must perforce work out the problem for himself; the solution is an individual one which a dependence upon others only serves to postpone. If I have any message it may readily be inferred from this; but all guides are blind guides in a world where we see in part and prophecy in part. If one were to sit still long enough he might hear what the Soul has to say and would perchance follow that leading, believing it the one for him. The fisherman is himself but a sort of trout in the great pool of the world, where Folly dangles one bait after another before his fishy eye. Some jump at a red rag and are soon caught;

others choose to wait until a more alluring bait appears—a minnow at least.

If pleasure were what we once dreamed it was; if money would buy that which we need most; if things were what they seem—but as it is, why should we make a wry face when our toys are put aside one by one? The world has already come to an end for me in some respects and this allows more time for the pursuit of profitable things. Already I have buried a score of selves and shall bury more. A precious lot they seem marshalled in my mind's eye, but one should not regard them altogether with melancholy for there is surely humour in the spectacle. Yet how much of my time—how much of any man's time—they have wasted.

Quicksand years that whirl me I know not whither,
Your schemes, politics fail, lines give way, substances
 mock and elude me,
Only the theme I sing, the great and strong-possess'd
 soul, eludes not,
One's self must never give way—that is the final substance—that out of all is sure,
Out of politics, triumphs, battles, life, what at last
 finally remains?
When shows break up, what but One's Self is sure?

It is an age of publicity. We live in the

newspapers and are fed with printer's ink—fed but not nourished. Yet I cannot believe that they are all dead who enjoyed privacy. We are making a tremendous ado which may be heard a full stone's throw from the earth. Nevertheless, there is good authority for believing that the kingdom of heaven is within. One does not wish to give the impression of being out of harmony with the age in which he lives, and, indeed, I would rather live in this than in any age of which I have read. Human nature appears to be very much what it was in all times. If few die by the sword in these days, yet many perish as of old because of the tongue. One would not have liked the Pharisees any better at the beginning of our era than now; and most men would have loved the good in mankind then as to-day, and sometimes have hated their own selfishness and despised their own weakness. But I do not believe that legislation will cure the selfishness of this world or that it will cure mine, or that *we* have improved matters as much as *we* think we have. In fact, I still believe in God and am convinced that the legislature never serves us better than when it adjourns. If the times are too commercial and money-loving to be altogether congenial, this is a mere

phase, like passing through the comet's tail, and when we emerge we shall see more clearly, may even see something besides money. There is always an epidemic of some sort and if any one for any reason does not take it, he should perhaps be congratulated. The sick, however, do not know what ails them and scoff at the idea of their suffering from a money fever or the miasma of worldliness, so that the disease has to run its course.

That which hath been is that which shall be; and that which hath been done is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun.

We are all good Tarasconais, loving fatuous praise at the expense of truth and offended by any salutary criticism that disturbs our complacent mediocrity. We wish to be known as musical for our braying; we are mountain climbers; travellers we, literati and connoisseurs. There are only rich men and beautiful heiresses nowadays. Alas, who is there left to cook for us? Ah, if human nature were not such an ass; if only men lived to truth rather than to appearance; if only they worked for love of the work! We do not trust God. It is *we* who shall cure all ills—we who have caused them, we who so resemble the June-

bug in our conduct of life. If I cannot bring myself to regard these conventions and mass-meetings as seriously as do some, neither do I take myself as seriously, seeing that I am not to-day the same man that I was yesterday. As for people's opinions, what are they for the most part but a little puff of smoke? When there is a smudge we call it fame. But who cares which way the wind blew yesterday, and what is a little smoke?

Hard riding and hard thinking make one delicate in some respects, as living in the open produces a sensitiveness to the stale air of the house. One may love his fellow man, and yet be able to endure but a very small quantity of mayonnaise and ice-cream; and some forms of amusement are an affliction to an able-minded man. With a horse or a desert I can amuse myself very well. Dolls' tea-parties are doubtless entertaining but what if you require the ocean for a plaything? If one really wants society and is not content with substitutes, it can be had, and like all things worth having, costs an effort. It is for this reason, perhaps, that so many put up with imitations, as they are content with substitutes for reading. Then, of course, some are satisfied when they are asked to dine with the family plate and

greatly pleased to find themselves in such an excellent company of forks and spoons. All are not martyrs, it seems, at a public dinner. Yet many attend this, as they attend everything else in this life, for reasons of business and politics. Surely a man may thank Heaven if his business is of a different sort and his politics demand no such sacrifice.

Some are frantic to know what they shall do to be saved, but in a world like this how can they hope for salvation without a sense of humour? Others are inquiring what they shall do to sleep, but the vital problem is to awake. Many again are uncertain as to why they are here, yet it seems obvious that we came to learn, and since we pay so high a price for the lesson it were a pity not to profit by it. Why else should we be here but to get understanding? He who travels this road will find himself quite alone and will be glad of the companionship of a few books written ages ago, and still more of the companionship of Nature who is still writing books. All the world is agog over a little comet while few pay any attention to the fixed stars, still less calculate their own orbit which really concerns them.

In spite of so many conflicting opinions and such diversity of aims, I must conclude that

wisdom is the true business of life, and that a great many things we do are an extravagant waste of time. From this point of view it appears that most men are postponing their lives, or have not yet begun to live and are merely playing at games which they name politics, society, and trade. Man lives an objective life, occupying himself with things. This is very well if he has found anything better worth his time than wisdom, for this, it must be remembered, is the fruit of the inner life alone. There is the Without and there is the Within—very ancient roads indeed—and it is provided in the scheme of human evolution that no one shall follow the wrong road without eventually discovering his mistake. The natural man is a fool; "the devil is an ass"; all is vanity—for if we have not peace within there is no peace for us; and if we have not riches within, there are for us no riches. Everywhere are men entombed in their houses and harassed to pay their bills, their days cut short by worry—yet the life is more than meat; everywhere people making such haste—in the wrong direction. But as it was written, it is first the natural man, then the spiritual man, and the natural man by the very condition of his mind is unable to perceive the truth. |

Beyond the common necessities, money has never given me anything else so valuable as leisure, and it does not take a great deal to buy this if one is determined to have it. Travel? The journeys I value most were those on foot or in the saddle, avoiding the beaten paths and living among the people, with eyes and ears open and little enough in my pocket. Education? The best of it is gained not in schoolrooms, but on the open road and by association with cultivated minds. Books? There are only a few and it is the ability to read them which counts. Why do I so value leisure? That I may have time for reflection, to be sure; time to calculate my own orbit, time to live. Most men are too busy for this. Above all, I have wished so to order my mind and my way of life that I might become receptive to the Truth, for there are no obstacles but such as exist in one's self and are possible of elimination. Truth falls upon us as the sun shines but absorption in worldly affairs, like a veil of clouds, obstructs the light from above.

Some may even ask, why this passion for Truth? why not dwell comfortably amidst our illusions? Some of the illusions of youth are pleasant enough while they last, and with

these it were foolish to quarrel. But those of the mature mind are the means of its bondage and, if we are to be free, emancipation must come through the realisation of Truth. Shall we not then love the Truth as life itself? You have heard much of political freedom, but observe the first house you enter, how many in that house are free? If any are content with political vapourings about Liberty, well and good, but he who aims to be free indeed will find that it is a state far removed from politics, and the government which most concerns him is the government of his own mind. Of all these people so desirous of impressing the rest with their importance and their possessions, not one possesses himself; of all these explorers, so eager to discover the unknown, not one has yet found himself.

The change from that which is designated the natural, to the spiritual man, is one to be reckoned with in philosophy as normal to the evolution of consciousness. It is this transition which has been called the second birth—an awakening, if you please—and it would appear that only thus does man arrive at his true estate. That which is assumed to be only a variety of religious experience, I conceive to be the most vital chapter of evolution. There

is first the tool-using animal—man—and from this developed brute the ultimate expansion of the true and spiritual man. The best textbooks we have as yet of this higher process are the religious books of the East, chiefly the Bible. But you may study it at first hand in your neighbours and if, on investigation, you perceive no sign of it in yourself, you have occasion for alarm.

Regeneration, then, we may take to be a natural process, and the second birth of more importance to the individual than the first, when he became an animal merely, not greatly differing from the ape for the time being, but with truly inspiring possibilities. There are no data at hand to prove that the animal-man pure and simple is capable of experiencing any greater degree of contentment than is the ape, and his superiority, beyond his tool-using capacity, lies largely in the immense inheritance which shall become his as a spiritual man. Until that time, his superior mind may not afford him any more real contentment than the inferior animal enjoys with its simple organ of thought and easily pleased emotional nature. No, not content, but discontent is the friend of the rudimentary man, sign that the higher evolution is to continue in him.

Only thus does he cease to live for his belly; only thus does he forsake the ape in himself and press onward toward the estate of man. Yet this regeneration is accomplished merely by the gradual removal of obstacles in himself to the free passage of that Light of which he is designed to be the instrument.

While these reflections have reference to the individual rather than to the State, my individualism resolves itself into this, that man is properly but a channel for a higher Will, a higher Wisdom than his own. He becomes most when he is least. His office, like that of a window, is to admit light. To deceive himself with the conceit that he is the creator of light is therefore only to obstruct his usefulness as a window. How much time has been spent in praise or detraction of dead writers, whereas it is the revelation of Truth and Beauty which is alone of any importance. With what fine scorn does every sect point the finger at every other sect. Yet there is one God, one Truth, and pray what does the rest amount to? Let them rant about the State as they will, the fact remains that the enemy of the State is the weakness and self-indulgence, the bulwark of any nation the virtue and sincerity, of the individuals that compose it: that is to say,

the home is the best friend of the State. And if any one desires to serve his fellow man in an effective way, without vaunt of charity or cant of religion, let him practise charity of thought and considerateness at home, clean-mindedness and common-sense, and encourage others so to do all the days of his life. Let him, moreover, keep his aches and pains to himself and surely he shall have his reward: for he will be able to look himself in the face and know that, whatever else he may be, he is not a humbug.

Some, it is said, are lonesome in the mountains. Others have sat too long in arm-chairs to appreciate the comfort of the saddle. They will not understand me but I understand them very well. If to-day I find the city more forlorn than the desert, it is no more than may happen to any one who lives out of doors. A distaste for the artificial takes possession of him, precisely as a repugnance to the natural develops in the indoor man. In spite of all "modern conveniences" I do not find life itself convenient when lived in a swarm, and have concluded that silence and adequate space are among the real comforts of life. It is not intended that Nature should replace mankind in our affections, but neither were the affairs of

man designed to take the place of Nature and absorb the entire attention. It is a significant fact in this connection that our view of Nature should be so influenced by our relation to people. No matter how far into the woods we may go, if this relation is inharmonious, the day is marred, the very light is invested with a certain hardness, the landscape is no longer sympathetic. Goodwill brightens the greyest sky. Therefore first make thy peace with thy brother.

We have relinquished much in order to be comfortable, but it is still possible to keep a few of the blessings of the old romantic life. If progress means home, if it means the love of the work and the love of the ideal, I will pay the price, for it is a good bargain. But if it means to sit at a desk the best part of life in order that we may loll in a club window for the few days left to us and stare into the street, then I would fain have a tent on the desert. One may decline to sell his birthright in Nature for any mess of pottage the world is likely to offer. Some time ago I gave up eating raw meat and shooting at strangers with poisoned arrows but these customs do not seem any more barbarous than wounding one's neighbours with the poisoned barbs of the tongue.

I desire to establish my relation with Nature on a loftier plane than it was in the days of my primitive life; not a savage, but a friendly relation permeated by a true feeling of kinship. There is a spirit of infinite friendliness in the woods but it is not to be encountered by the artificial man, nor yet by the wholly savage man. We see only that which we are ready to see.

A friendly song-sparrow is foraging at my feet for her young brood while at the same time I hear the call of the water-thrush near by. These birds, one so confiding, the other elusive and shy, the very spirit of the wild, are typical of my relation to Nature. A host of bees and wasps of various species, ichneumon flies, spiders, and ants are diligently pursuing their vocation and I am cheered by the consciousness that I am aware to some extent of their several aims, their traits and peculiarities, almost their thoughts, and of that relation they bear to the flowers, of which they themselves are unaware and must ever be: cheered as by a revelation of that Mind of which we each reflect a little.

Dwelling among my friends, I ask nothing better than that life should ever keep the wild flavour with which they invest it. Where the

lava peaks rise from the arboreal deserts, where, again, the snow lies under the silver firs of the Sierra, there are my friends also. To behold the mountains and the sea, the woods and fields, is essential to my prosperity here on Earth. To know what the carpenter and leaf-cutter bees are about, how the orioles are bringing up their families, and when the spiders construct their balloons and bridges, are matters of as much moment as any other news of the day. I perceive some commotion among the ants—a more industrious race than ours and somewhat inferior in intelligence—but am unable to discover the cause of their excitement. These small creatures march to battle, retain subject races in slavery, and have domestic animals. Their life is characterised by incredible energy of purpose and is not uneventful to them. They are not aware of man. Like him, they are deficient in humour. If perchance we are observed from a higher sphere, what reason is there to suppose that the excitement in our little world has any more significance than the commotion among the ants with which so few of us are concerned? Perhaps they also are celebrating their virtues. We who so disturb ourselves to-day will to-morrow be at rest with our fathers, and what

has the turmoil availed? For it was written in the beginning that nothing shall profit a man but character, nothing shall bring him peace but himself.

THE END.

